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Yours as ever
P. Wieting.

MEMOIR

OF

REV. PHILIP WIETING,

A PASTOR

FORTY YEARS IN THE SAME FIELD.

BY

REV. H. L. DOX.

PUBLISHED FOR THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

SAVE the Sermon herewith presented, not a scrap from the DEAR BROTHER'S pen escaped the flames. Hence, only as derived from printed documents, the *materials* have been gathered from personal memories.

Great pleasure is felt in acknowledging indebtedness for valuable contributions from the following friends, but for whose kindness the attempt would have been hopeless: Rev. H. N. Pohlman, D.D.; Rev. G. A. Lintner, D.D.; Rev. J. Z. Senderling, Rev. A. P. Ludden, Rev. N. Van Alstine, Rev. M. W. Empie, Messrs. W. Reagles, P. S. Cross, J. I. Empie, H. Loucks, Mrs. J. I. Empie, and last, but most, the widow, Mrs. Rev. P. Wieting, and the elder son, John Wieting.

Life! Character! Influence! Fearful but glorious realities. What tongue can utter or what pen describe their significance, their importance!

34126

Man makes the sunbeam paint the likeness of his form of clay, and thus secures a lasting shadow "ere the substance fades." But what art enables him to draw, even the outlines of the *strange thing* which animates that form! Actions are discovered and may be described; but *character*, which emanates from actions, how can its distinctive features be made cognizable by the senses? And that subtle something called *influence*, so endless in its modifications, so resistless in its sway, how can it be rendered palpable and permanent, and like material wealth, be transferred from generation to generation? Alas! the most important realities are the most ethereal. "The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

But man is not wholly a creature of sense. He is capable of apprehending the Spiritual. Even the mysteries of Life, Character and Influence do not entirely elude the grasp, either of his understanding or of his memory. Accordingly, virtue is communicable; the past is a continued present, and though friends are dead, they yet may speak. And here is found the true phi-

losophy of Biography. The records of the good and of the useful are never written or preserved in vain. Life on the printed page becomes immortal and unchangeable. That page is a part of the divine plan by means of which the "works of the blessed who die in the Lord are made to follow them."

With such views the present task is begun.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

Birth and Parentage, ... 13

CHAPTER II.

Life at the Seminary, ... 24

CHAPTER III.

Conversion, ... 38

CHAPTER IV.

Entrance upon the Ministry, ... 61

CHAPTER V.

Matrimonial Alliance, ... 80

CHAPTER VI.

State of the Sharon Charge, ... 93

CHAPTER VII.

Call and First Communion, ... 115

CHAPTER VIII.

Gathering Clouds, ... 132

CHAPTER IX.

Revivals, ... 150

CHAPTER X.

Synodical Troubles, ... 171

CHAPTER XI.

Finance and Family, ... 188

CHAPTER XII.

Anniversary and Valedictory, ... 205

CHAPTER XIII.

Elements of Character, ... 239

CHAPTER XIV.

Last Things, ... 257

CHAPTER XV.

Funeral Sermon, ... 276

CHAPTER XVI.

Closing Reflections, ... 300

CHAPTER I.

BIRTH AND PARENTAGE.

Rev. Philip Wieting—to whose life and labors the following pages are to be devoted—was born in the *town of Minden, Montgomery County, N. Y., Sept.* 23, 1800.

His father, John Christopher Wieting, was a native of *Brandenburg*, Germany. While at the University, at eighteen years of age, he was pressed into the British service under Burgoyne. To leave the institution, his native land and his father's house for the far off wilds of the new world and the unknown perils of a foreign war, seemed dreadful; and in the struggle his health failed and his countenance became dejected. While in this condition he met a young German officer of the British Army, who seemed to read the state of his mind and to sympathize with him. "Young man," said he, "what is the matter with you; why are you so dejected?"

The youthful conscript replied that he had been forced into the army and would be compelled to leave the country of his birth without even bidding adieu to his parents. "What is your name, sir?" inquired the interested officer. John Christopher mentioned his name and found he was speaking face to face with his *own brother?* What followed can be better imagined than described. The desponding soldier was assured that if money or other means could secure his release, he would be permitted to pursue his studies and enjoy the pleasures of home. "But," said the officer, "there is no alternative; you must go to America and fight for England against the Colonies."

He came; and at Saratoga, on the 17th of Oct. 1777, he was taken prisoner. He was now not only in America but in the hands of Americans. The question of country was thus providentially decided. He ceased to be a foreign soldier and became a Colonial citizen. Whether in the subsequent battles for freedom he took any part, is not known; but it is certain that immediately

after the close of the war, he settled in *Greenbush*, now Rensselaer County, and engaged in teaching school. How long he taught here or with what success has not been ascertained. But as there was, at this early day, a church existing here, bearing the name of the great Reformer, it is not unlikely that his religious preferences brought him to the place. Nor is it likely that his stay was very short, as during it he became sufficiently known and respected, to secure the confidence and affections of a *Miss Hainer*, whom he married; a name well known still in that part of the State.

From Greenbush he went to Minden, where the balance of his life was spent, and where his ashes now repose.

Here too he found a *Lutheran Society;* and here once more he established himself as a *school teacher*. Whether his services in this capacity had any connection with the church is not known. Nor can it be determined by what he was prompted to turn his attention to the ministry. It is probable, however, that he found the fold without a shepherd, and yielded to the wants of

the people in assuming the duties of the sacred office. He became pastor of the churches of *Minden* and *Otsquago* in the year 1795, and continued with them 22 years; "until with his labors he laid down his life!" He died Feb. 17, 1817.

Some time during the early part of his ministry, he was bereft of the companion of his early choice, and the mother of his eight children.

Subsequently he contracted a second marriage with a *Miss Groff*, of Stone Arabia; a lady of highly respectable family, many of the descendants of which are at the present time classed among the most valued citizens of the Mohawk Valley. Six children were the fruits of this marriage, two sons—of which Philip was the younger—and four daughters. It will thus be seen that he was the father of *fourteen children;* "most of whom remain until this day; but some have fallen asleep."

Neither public records nor personal recollections furnish much information respecting the ministerial qualifications or services of the Elder Wieting. A few well authenticated facts and in-

cidents are related by surviving cotemporaries, to some of which attention may be appropriately directed. It is said of him that he was a "good man," a "zealous minister," rather "Puritanic in his views of right," "spiritual in his feelings and aims," and "mighty in prayer." Says one, in speaking of him, "Thirty years ago I found several decidedly pious and deeply experienced persons who were the fruits of his labors in the gospel." And he adds, "In that early age, when the reign of dead formalism was almost universal, this man of God introduced and maintained social Prayer Meetings in the face of frantic opposition and persecution."

As alike indicating some of the characteristics of the man, both as a father and a minister, as also some of the early tendencies of the subject of this Memoir, one or two incidents may be briefly stated.

In one instance, at least, John and Philip gave evidence of the fact, so frequently noticed in boys, that the *appetite* is sooner and more vigorously developed than the *conscience*. The fruit of a

neighboring orchard presented temptations too strong to be resisted. Either because they could not or would not obtain the owner's permission to get what apples they desired, they took the matter in their own hands and satisfied themselves by stealth. The promptness with which this boyish recklessness was detected, does not more clearly illustrate parental vigilance, than does the manner in which it was rebuked, show tact and fidelity.

The boys were both members of their father's class of Catechumen. Soon after the above occurrence, it so happened that the lesson was our Saviour's version of the second table of the law—"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." After giving a careful exposition of the meaning and scope of this Divine precept, in a very emphatic manner, the teacher asked the question "Well, do you practice this law?" Considerable embarrassment was shown by the class and some hesitation; but at length some one faintly answered in the affirmative. The good man searchingly fixed his eyes upon his sons, and with a

significance of manner which they very well understood, sharply exclaimed, "*If you love your neighbor will you steal his apples?*"

Then, as now, *dancing* was a favorite and fashionable amusement. Then, as now, even the children of *Ministers* were liable to its fascinations. Then, as now, elevated piety, whether represented by the Pastor or the Parent, was constrained to enter a solemn protest against it. And such was the position taken by Mr. Wieting in his church and in his family. Against his children attending dances he interposed his authority, and so firmly did he hold the reins, that when they got away and went—as they sometimes did—they were compelled to appear in their every day apparel or secretly carry their better clothing to the dwellings of less scrupulous neighbors, by whose encouragement or connivance due attention might be given to the toilet.

Taking into the account the low and the loose standard of morality and religion which obtained during those dark days, such facts are suggestive of no ordinary discrimination and fidelity. It is

true, the sentimentality of our own times may question the widsom of an authoritative family government; especially the propriety of enforcing it upon adult offspring, and against popular amusements. But we shall do well to remember that if there was something of superstition in such sternness, there may be something sickly in our fine spun speculations. It must be confessed that in this case, as in many other similar cases, authority combined with vigilance, failed. Philip not only found his way occasionally to the ball room, but actually became a ring leader in the bewitching amusement of the dance. But is unexceptionable success the test of truth and wisdom in the management of the family? If so, what becomes of our own beautiful theories? Doubtless, authority may be a synonym for tyranny, as, what we are fond of calling *love*, may be merely another name for effeminacy. Here, as elsewhere, the "golden mean involves the true philosophy." But if the only alternative is family government sustained by parental authority, or family anarchy, the choice, in the light of scripture and of common sense, cannot be difficult.

As constituting a part of the plot on which once stood the Minden Church in which the Rev. John Christopher Wieting preached for nearly a quarter of a century, there is a graveyard. Here the venerable Pastor was buried among the members of his flock. The stone which marks the place where he slumbers may yet be seen. It bears his name, the date of his birth, the time of his ministry, and the day of his death. Near the top of the stone is an index finger, pointing upward, and in a semi-circular form is the following inscription,

"There is rest in heaven."

After the death of the father, Philip, with the rest of the children, remained under the sole care of the mother. Though a woman of strong mind and decided judgment, industrious and economical in her habits, and withal, ardently devoted to her children, it was difficult for her to govern and provide for them. She found a friend in *Mr. Jacob Empie*, of Freysbush, and for five years his house was her only home. When Philip was baptized, she laid him upon the altar of God, and

ever after, in her thoughts, desires and prayers, she devoted him to the ministry. He was wild, rude and troublesome as he grew up, but to her friends she often expressed the belief that he some day would honor the sacred calling. His habits and her destitution, however, caused those friends to discourage her from attempting to educate him. But, though faith had no foundation save in the promises of a covenant keeping God, she gave no place to doubt, always replying to the language of discouragement, "The Lord will provide." And he did provide. In the midst of the mother's perplexities and the waywardness of the son, a place was offered him in the family of *Dr. Hazelius*, then Principal of Hartwick Seminary, affording him an opportunity of entering upon his studies, and, as "a boy of all work," paying for his board. But glad as he was to avail himself of this opening, he had no sympathy with his mother's wishes, not only because his tendencies and habits disqualified him from even thinking seriously of the ministry, but also because he had already made choice of the law as

his profession. And when he left home for the institution there was, between his mother and himself, a direct antagonism, as to the mission of his life; she looking to the pulpit he to the bar. But, in this case, as in thousands of others, the mother's faith triumphed over the son's ambition.

CHAPTER II.

LIFE AT THE SEMINARY.

Leaving home for school! What a breach in the family, what an event in a young man's life! That breach how painful, that event how critical; especially if a protracted course of study is to end in a more complete and perhaps a more distant exilement from the parental roof. That son has been cherished from childhood with ever increasing solicitude, alternating between hope and fear. At the tribunal of domestic justice his faults and follies have been extenuated; from the merciless eye of the public they have been concealed. His weak points have been carefully guarded; his noble aspirations encouraged. It may be that home culture has failed to rouse him from stupidity or to restrain him from profligacy; but the hopes of loving hearts have kept him from despair, and virtuous associations have not permitted him to sink into abandonment. At home he was com-

paratively safe and might have continued to be so; but will he be safe far hence among strangers! How sad the necessity which incurs so fearful a risk! But that necessity is a relentless reality to which he must submit. Home furnishes many but not all the advantages, which are needed to fit him for the mission of life.

Perhaps the first cause of parental anxiety respecting a son at school, is uncertainty about his situation. Of the teacher under whose care he is placed, something may be known; but of the character of the students into whose society he is thrown, almost nothing can be known. Nor is much discrimination necessary to understand that the influence of the latter may more than counterbalance the instructions of the former. Strange and untried companions surround him. Early habits are sadly distracted or entirely broken up. Powerful temptations assail the most vulnerable points of his nature, and before he is aware of danger or can put himself in an attitude of defence, he is shorn of his strength. He has become the victim of fascination. Home was a place of weari-

some bondage and released from its restraints he rushes wildly forward to enjoy his newly acquired liberties. Objects of immediate gratification intoxicate him; the more distant literary and professional acquirements at which he aims, loose their hold upon him. Providential interpositions may arrest his headlong career. Left to himself he is lost. Or perhaps home ties were too numerous, too strong, too tender to be thus suddenly and rudely ruptured. Perhaps he left the enchanted sphere with a sorrow second only to the sorrow of bereavement. Surrounded by new associates he feels lonely. He sighs for sympathy, the manifestations of which he no longer enjoys. He is slow, even reluctant, in forming acquaintances, because he was so perfectly satisfied with the friends he left behind. He instinctively shrinks from his fellow students because their tastes and manners are so strikingly in contrast with the gentleness and forbearance of filial society. His soul sickens and his spirits sink as he meets his preceptor, critically precise and coldly polite; so unlike the generous glow of parental kindness to which he has been accustomed.

With what feelings young Philip left the home of his widowed mother for the academy, whether with joy, as securing relief from her vigilant guardianship, or with grief, as breaking up associations endeared by maternal love, can only be a matter of conjecture. That he respected his mother there is no room for doubt. That he had frequently disregarded the views and wishes of that mother, in following the phantoms of youthful pleasures, is equally evident.

To conceive of the anxiety with which the mother parted with her son, is not difficult. At his baptism she had laid him on the altar of God and devoted him to the work of the ministry. She had nourished and strengthened her faith despite of many discouragements, and proved her fidelity by firmly reproving and opposing his youthful irregularities. She unquestionably found some encouragement in the fact that he was to be quartered in the family of that venerable servant of God who had charge of the institution. It is clear, however, that she did not throw off her maternal responsibilities. Whatever may have been

her estimate of the advantages he was to enjoy, her heart yearned over him and her prayers and efforts in his behalf were unceasing.

Nor should the statement be suppressed that the position of a "boy of all work," in the family of the principal, was not very desirable either as imposing salutary restraints or as affording superior opportunities for improvement. A distinguished divine, still living, who knew young Wieting well, in a communication recently received, alludes to the cumbrous duties of his situation as an apology for his dullness as a scholar; adding, "I know what that means, for I once was there myself." The relation was really that of a servant who was expected to pay for his living by his labor. It is not necessary to suppose that the Doctor was scrupulous about an equivalent and exacting in his claims, in order to see how service frequently interfered with study. Help was needed in the daily duties of the establishment and it was but reasonable to require the student to bear the burden of them. Philip was, doubtless, treated kindly by the family; but this neither

implied marked attention nor respect. He lodged under the family roof; he ate at the family table; he was present during family worship; smiles and gentle words for special favors, and prompt—perhaps stern—rebukes for inattention and remissness;—these, unquestionably, made up the list of privileges which young Wieting here enjoyed. No decided impression was made upon him during his stay in this family. The reason is obvious. The Professor's hands were filled with care; the pupil's head was full of folly.

That Philip, early in life, was lured into questionable associations, and that, up to the time above mentioned, he indulged to a greater or less extent, in those indiscretions and irregularities to which young men of ardent temperament are peculiarly liable, are placed beyond a peradventure by his own well remembered statements, as also by the representations of those who were best acquainted with him. Nor is this so much a matter of surprise as of sorrow. It surely is not befitting that the present generation should sit in judgment upon the past for offences so alarmingly

prevalent, and which are treated with so much indifference.

There is, indeed, an impression, even among people who pretend to be intelligent and impartial, that the children of ministers are, as a class, "*worse* than other children;" that they have stronger tendencies to evil, and that a larger proportion of them become hopelessly abandoned. This impression is as unjust as it is unfounded. Tested by facts, the conclusion, viewed as a general statement, is untrue. Traced to its proper source, the measure of truth involved, when cast as an aspersion upon the profession, is cruelly unjust. Deeply is it to be regretted that so many bad examples may be given to strengthen this impression. But if those who seem so fond of making bad use of bad examples, would only follow effects back to their causes, they might, perchance, find that as they censure ministers they condemn themselves.

No one will say that constitutionally the servants of the altar are more deeply depraved than other mortals are. None will even venture to

suggest that the culture, by which men are fitted for the profession, renders them reckless of relative obligations. Nor, surely, will any be so preposterous as to intimate that the children of ministers are "conceived in iniquity and born in sin" in any deeper or more hopeless sense, than are the children of parents devoted to other callings. Hence, all that is peculiar in the perversity of the offspring of clergymen, must be regarded as the fruit of their circumstances in life; over which most of them have very little control. Though the case under consideration is imperfectly understood, it will sufficiently illustrate the point submitted.

The charge of the elder Wieting was composed of two churches, the members of which were scattered over an area of, perhaps, one hundred square miles. He was the father of *fourteen* children, the fruit of two marriages. It is probable that the salary upon which this large family depended was scarcely enough to supply all with food and clothing. And it is certain that the population among which the children were born and brought up,

were neither noted for religion or morality. The vices common to mankind were prevalent by sufferance, if not by encouragement. Think of combining the responsibilities of such a charge with the responsibilities of such a family; think of fourteen children, with all their liabilities, situated as above described; and if some of them do not turn aside from the strict proprieties of virtue, it surely must be that all are something more or something less than human. With less to embarrass and more to encourage, many families have left a less desirable record; with more restraints and less temptations than young Philip realized, many young men have gone deeper into sin.

His habits of study and progress in scholarship afforded little promise of distinction or usefulness. He entered the seminary 1818 and left it 1825; and in speaking of his application and attainments, one of his fellow students says, "Upon the whole, I doubt whether during the whole of his scholastic career, extending over the long period of seven years, he acquired more than the mere rudiments of an education; and I think

that his faculties were not fully developed until after he entered upon the active duties of the ministry, and had come in open contact with the world, the flesh and the devil." In arriving at this conclusion, the same cotemporary says, "He was far from being a bright scholar, and was rarely, if ever, perfect in his recitations. Indeed, I scarcely ever knew a boy more obtuse and dull of comprehension, or one who afforded his teachers a wider field for the exercise of the 'grace of patience.'" This view accords perfectly with the representations of another surviving fellow-laborer in the Master's vineyard, who during student life was still more intimately associated with him. He says, "Study seemed hard to him. His grade of scholarship, therefore, was rather low. Still, by the help of his friends he got along, and kept afloat."

How superficial and how erratic are the popular views of professional education, both as to its manner and its mission! The follies and failures of centuries have not sufficed to eradicate the absurd idea, that the same course of study must be pursued for the same length of time by all, irre-

spective of peculiarities. Why do we not here learn the lesson of discrimination and particular adaptation, which elsewhere we practice so well. Seven years in the seminary left the faculties of young Wieting undeveloped. Nor would he have risen to scholarship or been much better fitted for the work of the ministry had he remained there seven years longer. Two years in active duties, in open contact with "the world, the flesh and the devil" gave him a wider range and a higher order of discipline, than he could have acquired in ten years of hard study in the school-room. And the reason is entirely obvious. He was thoroughly *practical* and required the burden of responsibility and the inspiration of effort to secure development.

The *rudiments* of an education, the result of *seven years*—among the best of his life—at the seminary! And this, not because of incapacity or inaptitude for improvement, but because the means of instruction were not adapted to his nature and necessities. What a waste of precious time! If, out of the seven, four of those years had been spent in earnest evangelistic work, at the expiration of that period, he probably would have

been as far advanced in the rudiments, and much better fitted for the duties of the profession, than he was by being shut up to books and the recitation room. And, while his education would have been more hopefully progressing, with the energy and enthusiasm he possessed, his efforts might have caused some openings in the "waste, howling wilderness," by which the church of that day was surrounded.

No disparagement of the "curriculum" of Hartwick at that time, is intended. Nor is this statement an objection to the most extended course of study at the present time. But while there is thoroughness let there be discrimination. Confine bookworms to the cloister; but do not cage the eagle, if you would have him obtain strength and skill for flight.

Mr. Wieting's *social rank* at the seminary was in perfect contrast with his scholarship. And this was just what might have been expected. Sociality and study are antagonisms. One may have a capacity for either, but is not likely to excel in both. It was "hard work" for Philip to get his lessons; but it was very easy for him to interest

and please his fellow-students. Says one of them, "He was a general favorite because his imperturbable good nature never failed him even under the most trying circumstances." Says another, "The students all respected and loved him. He was always very cheerful, fond of the boys, in whose plays he often mingled. He was kind to all, ready to do a favor, rarely, if ever, angry."

A single seminary incident, related by both the Rev. gentlemen from whose communications the above quotations have been taken, is so strikingly characteristic, that it seems to merit a place in this connection. Though given from memory, these relations are remarkably harmonious, differing only in the fact that some features of the occurrence are brought out more distinctly in the one, and others in the other. Permission is desired to so borrow from each as to blend the two.

"The students were playing ball upon the campus. It was Wieting's turn at the bat. He struck with all his might, but unfortunately, instead of hitting the ball, the bat slipped from his hand and took one of the boys on the shin. The injured student was a stalwart Seneca Indian by

the name of *Jimeson*, afterwards appointed Assistant Surgeon of the United States Navy, and died at Gibraltar. No sooner was he struck than he sprang upon Wieting with the ferocity of a tiger. Everybody expected a regular pitched battle; but the angry passions of the moment were soothed and the storm averted. The good-natured Wieting received the blow on his back, contracted his shoulders, and, putting his hands over his eyes, exclaimed, in a sort of whining tone, "*O, Jimeson, you hurt my feelings.*" An explosion of laughter broke forth from all present, in which the infuriated son of the forest joined, and peace was soon restored."

Those at all acquainted with the mirth-moving capabilities of Mr. Wieting, even later in life, need no representation on canvas to enable them to reproduce this scene at will, or to appreciate the merriment which it occasioned.

Here, for the present, upon the life of the student, the curtain drops. When raised again, things of a very different character will claim attention.

CHAPTER III.

CONVERSION.

Contemplated from the stand point of the Christian, *Conversion* is one of the important events of life, if, indeed, it is not the most important. Well did the Great Teacher designate this wonderful change as a *new birth*. It introduces us not only into a *new state*, but it makes us "*new creatures*." The "old man" is "crucified" and "put off" and the "new man" is "put on," which "after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Existence becomes a different thing. It is true the same faculties and susceptibilities in number and in kind distinguish alike the same person whether carnally or spiritually minded. And it is also true that sinful tendencies and habits survive the transformation and continue a source of temptation and of trial. But the life of the Christian is so different from the life of the unregenerate, that respecting its mission and motives,

its aspirations and associations, it may literally be said, "Old things have passed away, and behold all things have become new." The convert is convinced that his former course and character have been wrong. He confesses and deplores it. He resolves to abandon his sins, and furnishes the best security that can be given—sincere penitence—that he will do so. Accordingly, no right minded person will hold him responsible for past irregularities, so long as he continues to bring forth fruit meet for repentance! Conversion, therefore constitutes, not only a new starting point for life, but as well a new standard of judgment. The ignorance, the superstition, the impurity, the infidelity, the untruthfulness, the dishonesty—in a word, all the "affections and lusts" of the "old man," in the account which the community has kept with him, are in some sense cancellated, and a new account is opened. This is the Apostolic doctrine. "Such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

This great event in the life of Mr. Wieting—his *conversion*—is now to claim attention.

Greatly is it to be regretted that no connected narrative can be produced. The materials for such a narrative can neither be obtained from private records nor from personal memory. Those who have been at all acquainted with Mr. Wieting's views respecting a "change of heart"—the positiveness with which he enforced the necessity, the care and discrimination with which he demanded the evidence, the interest he always evinced in relations of "Christian experience," will doubtless be surprised at the announcement that the details of the "great change" in his own life are hopelessly lost to the Church and the world. But this fact will excite less amazement, when it is remembered that in those days little account was made of *heart* experience. Baptism in infancy, confirmation at the proper age, the occasional observance of the Lord's Supper in after life—these were the distinctive conditions and claims of Church membership. Evidently, under the instructions and influence of his venerable

father, Mr. Wieting had received different impressions. But up to the time when he became a subject of grace, these impressions of necessity must have been very imperfect. The same views, under other circumstances, would have produced different results. But instead of being requested and encouraged to relate his experience, as converts now are, he yielded to his natural timidity and felt restrained by the customs of the church. And as he did not find occasion to gather up and arrange the incidents of his conversion at the time when this work is usually done, if at all, it is not improbable that historically and theoretically, it never took any definite form even in his own mind. And perhaps the remarkable particularity with which this matter was enforced upon others, may have been prompted by conscious neglect and deficiency respecting it in himself. Whether this explanation will satisfy the reader or not, it is the only one the writer has to offer. Amid the varied intimacies of ministerial association and personal friendship, extending over a period of more than a quarter of a century, no point was

kept so constantly prominent, none seemed with him so controlling as the great truth—"Ye must be born again." And never was this asserted without being coupled, either by expression or implication, with that other great truth, that he who is "born of God," "hath the witness in himself." How then it came to pass that, while he was ceaselessly bringing inquirers to the test of "experience" and admitting none to the membership of the Church but such as gave "credible evidence of a change of heart," the facts of his own experience should have become so obscured, unless as above accounted for, is wholly beyond the reach of conjecture.

The idea of a connected narrative, accordingly, must be dismissed. Nevertheless, the reality, in all its essential features, may be placed in a very clear and satisfactory light. The few incidents which are to be named are authentic. And they involve the agencies which God is usually pleased to employ in effecting his gracious designs; the prayers and efforts of his people; the power of truth; the influence of the Spirit; the interposi-

tions of Providence, the mental and moral powers of the subject. The effect of each was decisive; the struggle—when it came—was short but terrible; just what might have been expected in one of his temperament and habits; the change, though more or less modified by circumstances, was characteristic and satisfactory.

During the period of Seminary life, of which some account has been given, Dr. Hazelius became so thoroughly dissatisfied with young Wieting's conduct in and out of school, that he wrote to his mother, informing her that her son was making no progress in his studies and that his general deportment was so exceptionable that he could bear with him no longer; and advising her to take him home and find for him some other employment. Though it is not likely that the afflicted widow had remained altogether in ignorance of his course up to this time, yet this communication must have been received with heart rending anguish. What a trial to her faith! She had given him to God. She had consecrated him to the service of the altar. Her firmness had

not wavered by the discouragements of poverty, the opposition of friends, the religious thoughtlessness of his early years, his known choice of another profession. But now a revelation reaches her that his habits were unendurable and that his connection with the Institution could no longer be tolerated. What but the moral heroism of a mother, the unfaltering trust of a Christian could have sustained her in this dark and dreadful hour! The faith of Abraham reached the highest sublimity, when he lifted the knife to slay his son. The faith of Jacob became triumphant when, with unshaken determination, he exclaimed to the Angel of the Covenant, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." And was not the faith of this mother in Israel "accounted unto her for righteousness," when calmly looking these discouraging facts in the face, she firmly resolved to overcome all difficulties arrayed against her hopes. She did not discredit the statements of the teacher nor blame him for not effectually correcting the improprieties of her son. She did not become impatient and petulant, and resolve to

make him feel the restraints and burdens of hard work at home or under the eye of some heartless task master. She did not abandon her hopes, sink into despondency, and give him up as lost. She did not call him home in accordance with the Professor's request, nor did she commit her admonitions and entreaties to paper. She felt that her *personal presence* was demanded and the letter received was answered by her appearance at the Seminary. This was a wise expedient; perhaps the only one which would have been effective.

O, that mothers could understand and would employ the power with which God has entrusted them! That expressive countenance upon which infancy first gazed; that tender voice which first thrilled the heart of childhood; that gentle hand whose many offices of kindness met the ever multiplying wants and wishes of advancing years; what heart so hard, what will so obstinate, what habit so unyielding, as to resist them!

Mrs. Wieting's first business was with the Professor. She met him respectfully but decidedly. She asked for more particularity than the letter

contained respecting Philip's conduct. And having secured the desired information and satisfied herself that the conclusions arrived at were not the result of passion or prejudice, the earnest and persevering mother sought the lodgings of her son. Those who have felt or seen the depth and intensity of maternal anxiety in meeting such an emergency, may imagine, but surely no pen can describe the solicitude with which her admonitions and entreaties must have been uttered. What words she spake, what appeals she brought to bear never can be known, as the only ears which were open to them are now forever closed. But respecting that visit, three things of noticeable significance have been ascertained. One is that Philip heard his mother's message with respectful but unbroken silence. He only spake to express his thanks. This silence is easily interpreted. His conscience endorsed his mother's upbraidings. He was overwhelmed with shame. He evidently resolved to reform though he made no promise. Another is, that the impressions produced by the interview on the mother's mind

prompted her to make the request that he might remain at the Seminary—a request which was unhesitatingly granted. Why was it granted? Did this widow's logic convince the Professor that he had made a mistake, or did her importunity triumph over the decrees of justice? No matter. He yielded; and it was well he did. The third thing known respecting that visit, is the result. A short time after, this anxious mother received a second letter from the same source. The tidings it brought were in joyful contrast with the contents of the first letter. *Philip had changed his course.* He had become consistent in his deportment and diligent in his studies. He was susceptible of maternal influence. The claims of truth were felt and acknowledged. His errors were seen and abandoned. The mountain was removed from the mother's heart. Her faith was sustained, her hopes revived.

Yes, Philip was a better boy—better in his studies, better in his behavior. And his improvement had begun at the right place. It originated in his convictions, not in the force of cir-

cumstances. It is true the pressure had been tremendous; but it reached his understanding. He was excited, but evidently not controlled by impulse. Silence in his mother's presence and reform, succeeding her departure, are proof of the triumph of principle. More: there was undoubtedly something *religious* about this change in his habits, though it did not involve religion. His moral feelings were quickened; his sense of right was intensified; he realized his accountability, and deprecated if he did not repent of his past follies. But here, for the present, we are compelled to leave him. He was reformed but not regenerated. His habits became regular, but his heart was yet rebellious. He bowed to the wishes of his mother, but refused to be in submission to the will of God. He cared for his reputation—but not for his soul.

Leaping now over an interval of time of unknown length, another decisive event, looking hopefully in the direction of a brighter future, requires attention. How clearly the hand of God is seen in the *order* of occurrences! One pre-

pares the way for another. But for the mother's visit to the Seminary the incident about to be mentioned could not have occurred. By that visit the moral nature of young Wieting was roused to activity, and accordingly, he was in condition to take broader and more radical views and a more advanced position.

There were no temperance societies in those days. The use of intoxicating beverages was universal. Though drunkeness was deemed disreputable, moderate drinking was held to be a necessity. Ministers and members of the church drank without compunction. The appetite of the young was gratified without apprehension. The divinity student, compelled by his poverty to work for his board, drew on his stinted resources to pay his grog bills without any conviction of impropriety.

Is it strange, therefore, that Mr. Wieting, so social in his habits, so generous in his impulses, should have become devoted to his daily glass? Such was the fact. Not only did appetite daily repeat the demand, but habit had definitely fixed

the hour of the day when that demand was to be satisfied. And as regularly as the day came and the hour approached, he left his books for the bar, and when he returned to them again study was stimulated by the effect of a "Gin Cocktail." How long he had been the victim of this pernicious practice, is among the many questions to which no answer can be given.

> "There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
> Rough-hew them how we will."

And the time had arrived when these tendencies to confirmed dissipation, were to be arrested.

There came a dark and stormy day, so stormy, that the impression is that the students did not leave their rooms for their recitations. The hour for indulgence arrived; and, true to the promptings of appetite, Wieting threw his outside coat over his shoulders and started for his potation. He reached the foot of the stairs, and—suddenly stopped. In relating the fact to the friend from whom the statement was received, he said that pause was perfectly unaccountable. He turned

around and went back to his room. Yes, that pause is as unaccountable to us as it was to him. Yet who has not had similar experiences? In the life of the writer many such pauses have occurred. And is it not true, that we are unconscious of our motives in some of the most important movements? It must be so. We do, and we neglect to do, and why, we cannot always tell. And so it happened with Mr. Wieting. He started for his daily dram, stopped short, turned about and went back; but of the mental process which caused him to do so, he was evidently as ignorant as we are.

But appetite is persistent as well as clamorous, and he soon took his coat a second time and left his books for the bar. Again he reached the foot of the stairs, and again he was arrested. This time, however, his understanding, his conscience, his will, were called in requisition. "Am I such a fool as to go out in such a storm for a glass of liquor? Am I a slave to appetite? I'll not go another step." Such were the questions suggested, and such the laconic reply. Once more

he went back to his room, but not to his books. He was deeply agitated and walked the floor, thinking rapidly but with more or less confusion. The issue was now fairly joined. Habit and appetite imperatively demanded indulgence; reason and conscience withstood the demand. The conflicting forces of his nature were fully roused, the struggle was fierce, the result doubtful. Reason had charged him with folly for seeking indulgence at such a sacrifice; passion now accused him of weakness for heeding such suggestions. A third time, and with something like determination, he seized his coat and started for the street. Vain endeavor! The hand of Him who says to the raging billows, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther," was once more laid upon him at the foot of the stairs. Here was the battle ground. Around this point association now rallied, reason and conscience, and the "law of his mind," if not the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," and again, and finally, upon the pending question, gained the ascendancy. He returned to his room mortified, ashamed, disgusted. He saw that if

already he had become such a slave to his cups, that he could not get through a single day without stimulating drink, it was high time for him to stop. And he did stop. Then and there he resolved firmly to abandon intoxicating beverages. He took the pledge, he became a temperance man, before this great reform was inaugurated. And it is believed that with him this great question was then practically and finally settled; that he never subsequently touched, tasted or handled the intoxicating cup.

That in this terrible contest, the blessed Spirit acted an important part, there can be no doubt. This Divine agency, which operates through and by means of the powers and susceptibilities of our nature, stimulated and controlled the action of his mind, and enabled him to achieve this important and sublime victory. But it is not often that a besetting sin—and especially such a sin—is so instantaneously and so completely overcome by an unregenerate person, whatever may be the measure of Divine influence to which he is subject.

Mr. Wieting's position now became not only in-

teresting but hopeful. In his moral feelings, in his convictions, and largely in his habits, he stood committed to truth and right as ruling principles. With prejudice or with scepticism upon the subject of religion it seems he never had much trouble. There were, indeed, many favorable indications in his case. He had made good progress in the right direction. And so few were the visible hinderances in the way of his becoming a Christian, that it might have been said with some propriety, "He is not far from the Kingdom of Heaven."

Such a conclusion, however, on our part would be premature, as it is not known whether up to this time he had ever been the subject of any decided religious impressions. Not upon mere encouragements, however great, can it ever be safe to rest our hopes of any man's salvation. The young ruler who had kept all the commandments from his youth up, and who, in the most respectful manner, came to Jesus with that important question "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" when the self-denying conditions were enforced, "went

away sorrowful." Notwithstanding, there are instances in which there is an apparent certainty that conversion will occur whenever measures of a suitable character are brought to bear. And such seems to have been the case of Mr. Wieting. He had, in some sense, become prepared, by the changes already experienced, to become a Christian. Not that they were necessary but that they were favorable.

Here, again, we pass in ignorance, and hence in silence, over a period of the length of which no opinion can be formed. No journal, no letters, no memories of surviving cotemporaries enable us to bridge the chasm. The order of the incidents given and to be given as connected with his conversion, is undoubtedly correct; but of their distance from each other, as, also, of intervening occurrences, it would be vain to indulge, even in conjecture.

Of the class of ministers known as modern *Evangelists*, the Rev. Charles G. Finney, was clearly among the first. Few general awakenings, answering to what are now called *Revivals*,

especially in the State of New York, took place before he commenced his labors. His adaptation and his efficiency will be doubted only by the most ignorant and the most sceptical. His wonderful power with God and with men has been largely felt and generally acknowledged both in this country and in Europe. And it is worthy of special note that he, unlike most other men, has retained and continued to exercise this power, even down to "three score years and ten." Nevertheless his strength was evidently greatest after his mind and experience had become mature, and before his energies and enthusiasm began to abate.

It must have been during this stage of Mr. Finney's labors, that young Wieting heard him preach. *Where*, the information does not state; probably at Cooperstown. Neither is it known whether more than one sermon was heard, nor what particular truth it was which arrested his attention. He was, however, deeply awakened and convicted of sin. And nothing could have been more likely. The preacher was solemn,

searching, pungent, authoritative. The hearer was in some measure prepared for the message.

He was impressible; and whatever may have been true of his perceptions, his understanding and his conscience were vigorous. In the instances already mentioned, they had secured and maintained the mastery over the will. It is not likely that he gave any public expression to his feelings, save, perhaps, by a dejected countenance and flowing tears. But, groaning beneath his burden, he hastened from the house of God and shut himself up in his room. Here, alone, he met the powers of sin and hell in their fiercest form and in their final onset. Here, he saw himself sinking in the horrible pit and the miry clay. Here he drank the bitter, bitter cup and wrung out its dregs. For three days and three nights, fasting and without sleep, he struggled for deliverance from the "body of this death." O, the mysteries of iniquity, the depths of human depravity, the awful "enmity of the carnal mind against God!" What blackness of darkness envelopes the understanding; how perverse is the

will; how fully is the heart set to do evil! "The light shineth in the darkness and the darkness comprehendeth it not." "The law in our members wars against the law of the mind, and brings us into captivity to the law of sin and death." And how long we "halt between two opinions" after we are fully convinced of sin. Even when we are "almost persuaded," what a struggle it costs to act upon our convictions! How like crucifixion itself were the birth pangs endured in that solitary room!

But deliverance came at last. The burden rolled off at the sight of the cross; the Bastile of bondage was left for that liberty wherewith Christ makes free. Young Philip, like the disciple whose name he bore, heard the voice of Jesus, saying, "Follow me." He obeyed that voice, and like the same disciple, went forth satisfied that he had "found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write." Says our informant, when he left his room "he was a new man in Christ Jesus."

Thus with the feeble light afforded—only a

few fitful flashes here and there—the attempt has been made to represent the prodigal in his wanderings, as he came to himself and as he returned to the only resting place of the soul. And we merely get a glimpse of him as he comes into the Kingdom, and then again the curtain drops.

Enough, however, has been seen to indicate the peculiarities of his nature and of the gracious change wrought in him. In that change we have an earnest of the glorious mission to which he was destined. He was impulsive; the means which reached him were positive; the result was decisive. Though impulse was in subordination to reason, yet it was not for him to linger long in a state of indecision. It was not possible for him to be half hearted. In every important act of his life, he threw the entire force of his nature.

All idea of entering upon the legal profession was now abandoned. His fixed and earnest purpose was to prepare himself for and to devote his life to the self-sacrificing work of a gospel minister.

Widowed mother, behold thy son! Once

more, not now in the trial but in the triumph of thy faith, place him in consecration upon the Altar of God. Roll off from thy long burdened soul, upon him and upon Christ, the pledge given in his behalf at his baptism. Faithfully hast thou kept that pledge.

CHAPTER IV.

ENTRANCE UPON THE MINISTRY.

Mr. Wieting left Hartwick in 1825. He was then in the 25th year of his age. "During the summer of that year he preached under the direction of his Theological Professor, at *Le Ray, Jefferson Co., N. Y.*" On the 6th of the following September, associated with *Jacob Berger* and *W. J. Eyer*, he was licensed by the New York Ministerium, at a meeting held at Rhinebeck, Duchess Co., in the charge of the venerable Dr. Quitman.

Licensure is really a very important step in the course of a candidate for the sacred office. It is the point of transition from study to service; from the seminary to the church. Rarely, however, is its significance apprehended. Too much anxiety, dread and even fear, are felt about the *examination*, to experience much devotion or solemnity. Not often, perhaps, is the occasion itself or the responsibilities about to be assumed, much thought

of. Nor is this a matter of surprise. An examination before an ecclesiastical body is really a very different thing from a recitation at the theological seminary. All here is strange and uncertain. Unheard of questions may be proposed, and possibly in the most bungling and unintelligible form. Distinctions, combinations and qualifications may be introduced never before thought of by either the examiner or the examined. And if the candidate on any account feels himself the object of suspicion or prejudice, his embarrassment may become confusing, if not overwhelming.

From what has already been said respecting Mr. Wieting's rank as a scholar, it is easy to see how both he and his friends may have looked forward to this trying crisis with something of concernment. It is not very particularly known how well he sustained himself, though from all available sources of information it is pretty certain that he suffered no disparagement. He was presented to the Ministerium by the esteemed Professor of Theology, the Rev. Dr. Hazelius, who well understood his attainments as a pupil and his quali-

fications as a preacher. And, without casting unwarrantable reflections upon this distinguished divine, it cannot be supposed that he would recommend a person for holy orders whom he regarded unworthy of them. This view of the profesor is fully confirmed by the action of the examining committee and of the Ministerium. The committee consisted of Rev. Dr. Mayer, Rev. Messrs. Hecht, Geissenhainer and Schaeffer. They submitted the following

"REPORT."

"That, after an examination of the students, Jacob Berger, Philip Wieting and William John Eyer, upon the most important parts of divinity, church history, and the exposition of the New Testament, in the Greek language, the committee were considerably gratified with the abilities and attainments of those gentlemen," in consequence of which, they offer the following resolution:

"*Resolved*, That Jacob Berger, Philip Weiting, and William John Eyer, be admitted as candidates, and as such receive the usual license."

"On motion, it was unanimously adopted."

Thus it is seen that this dreaded ordeal was successfully passed.

Scholarship, however, is one thing; fitness for the ministry is another. Excellent students often become very poor preachers and pastors; while perhaps the most unpromising of a class, in actual service, outstrips all his fellows. The explanation is not difficult. Scholarship has to do chiefly with the intellect; ministerial duties call in requisition the elements of moral character. The development and discipline of the one does not involve a corresponding improvement of the other. The student, as such, secures distinction by concentrating his time and attention upon his books, and by storing his mind with technicalities, formula and the opinions of school men. Meanwhile, the dull school scholar may be drinking deeply at the living fountains of knowledge. He may be closely reading men and things, treasuring up current facts and principles, watching carefully the workings of society in all its aspects, and attentively studying the secrets of success. Both may

be making commendable progress but in very different directions. To judge of their relative merits they must be tested by different standards. The one easily bears away the honors of the class-room, the commencement exercises, the ecclesiastical examination; honors of which the masses have very little appreciation, and which, accordingly, will be of little service amid the toils and trials of a pastor's life. The other meets all these tests, perhaps fails in them all, without anything like a fair trial of the extent and character of his real attainments. He is not to win his laurels in any such way. He has *worked* while his class-mate has *studied*. He has grappled with the *practical* while the other has been devoted to the *theoretical*. And now, when *work* is to be the standard of judgment, the day of his glory dawns. He may not be a tyro in systematic theology, because an earnest practical mind theorizes by induction. But at all events, in what attainments he has, he is in sympathy with the living, breathing *present*, not with the dead and buried past.

As has been observed, Mr. Wieting did not suf-

fer in his ecclesiastical examination. How he compared with his associate applicants, does not appear from the report of the committee nor from the action of the Ministerium. Neither made any discrimination. All were recommended, and all received license. Nor, in the case of Mr. Wieting, were the powers and privileges thus conferred, ever dishonored.

In taking leave of this brief contrast between the past and the present—especially the future—the conclusion arrived at cannot be more appropriately expressed than in the language of a fellow-student:

"That 'the child is father to the man,' has passed into a proverb; but the case of our friend proved an exception: for his early career gave no promise of the able, wise and energetic minister he afterwards became."

Fully authorized now to perform all the functions of a gospel minister, Mr. Wieting returned to the new field of which previously he had taken possession. He made his home at *Lowville, Lewis Co.*, from which place, as from a

central point, he extended his labors in every direction.

This section of the State had been explored by Dr. Hazelius, who evidently regarded it as a mission ground of more or less promise. Nor is it likely that he was mistaken; though after the lapse of nearly half a century, except in a few localities, Lutheranism remains almost unknown. Had the field been properly manned and the work of culture continued and sustained, many churches might have been planted which in process of time might have become strong and flourishing.

It always seems ungrateful for children to criticise the doings or to censure the failures of their fathers. In fact, posterity never will understand, never can fully appreciate the hardships, the difficulties and the discouragements of the pioneer. Their judgment, accordingly, is often as unjust as it is ungenerous. What are looked upon as mistakes were, perhaps, simply necessities; and modes of procedure, the neglect of which, would now be unpardonable, may heretofore have been unknown or impossible. But progress increases

practical wisdom as well as material resources. Hence, the errors of the past, which should be regarded with regret as unavoidable misfortunes, must be looked upon, if fallen into at present, as the most inexcusable, if not the most criminal of blunders. Mr. Wieting was a missionary; justice, therefore, to him, while acting in this capacity, requires that the system of missionary operations to which he was subjected, should receive due attention. Nor, when necessary for such a purpose, should speaking of defects be construed as finding fault with them. But let no one infer that like defects, characterizing present plans, are to be regarded with like forbearance.

Mr. Wieting was sent, a solitary laborer, into an area of country in which several active men might have found ample employment. And to obtain even a scanty subsistence, he was compelled to so multiply appointments that their infrequency at the same locality militated seriously against his influence. Only the outskirts could thus be reached, as the centres of business and the more important settlements were easily controlled

by those who could bestow upon them the labor they required. Thus Dr. Hazelius, in a report of a missionary tour, speaks of preaching "for Mr. Wieting to the congregation in the *neighborhood* of Lowville." He speaks, too, of having preached "in the village," but there the service was held "in the Methodist chapel." Lutheran churches in the *neighborhoods* and other churches in the *villages and cities*. So it was then, so it is now. If the question is asked why Mr. Wieting did not concentrate his efforts at Lowville or in some other village, instead of scattering them over two or more counties, the true answer probably is, *he could not live by it*. In a new field there is a single alternative; concentration supported by foreign aid, or self-support secured by laying many localities under contributions. So far as is known, Mr. Wieting received no assistance from abroad, and hence, to extend his labors was a necessity. And in his case, the result was, just what it has been in hundreds of cases since, just what it was reasonable and right it should have been, just what under like circumstances it ever will be: *overworked* and

underpaid, he was prepared to accept the first call to a more desirable situation. Had there been no other reasons for his leaving the field—as there were—this would have been sufficient.

Nor can it be out of place in this connection, to raise the question of propriety about sending young men, fresh from the seminary, into the uncultivated wastes of the Master's vineyard. Is it just to them, is it good ecclesiastical policy?

To say the least, it is just as important that a young man should be well educated *in* the ministry as *for* the ministry. That the foundations of a professional character should be broadly and firmly laid is of the highest possible moment. And who does not know that the force of circumstances has everything to do with the formation of habit. The surroundings of even a minister, and especially of a young minister, must materially effect him. How can he improve either mind or manner, where there is neither model, motive, occasion, nor opportunity? How can he cultivate system in the midst of confusion? How can he study without place, time or books? Meet-

ing a half dozen appointments every week, and riding long distances from one to another, how can he prepare his sermons with care, or, preaching without preparation, how can he attract the masses or satisfy the most stupid of audiences? Without congenial associations, how can he avoid reticence on the one hand, or a species of social recklessness on the other? If he continues to aim at an elevated standard, what but despondency awaits him? If he lowers his aspirations, must he not become common-place and powerless? Here, as elsewhere, there doubtless are exceptions. But that in a large majority of cases, such a commencement is followed by life-long embarrassments, among thousands of others, the writer can testify.

Mr. Wieting was one of the many who have thus suffered. With no special fondness for books, his situation and his duties not only involved an excuse, but a necessity for neglecting them. Not very methodical, either constitutionally or as a matter of education, at that critical period he was placed where method was simply

impracticable. Pre-eminently susceptible of all sorts of social influences, ministerial proprieties were the only limits he could be expected to recognize; nor, with such a nature and such surroundings, was it strange if even those limits were sometimes transcended.

But the "law of compensation" pervades even such privations and inconveniences. Evils most deeply deprecated are often the greatest blessings. Mr. Weting's first experiences in the ministry were neither favorable to success nor improvement. They seem to us, as they really were, unfortunate. Those who have the supervision of young men at this critical juncture may profit by the lessons of wisdom which they suggest. Nevertheless, his disadvantages were evidently among the "all things which worked together for his good." Of necessity he was active. He saw and felt his deficiencies. He was compelled to be scrupulously economical. His observations were extensive. Favorable opportunities were afforded for reading men and things. He acquired tact. In a word, he secured a breadth and variety of

discipline the value of which he appreciated in after life.

Let not the reader, however, infer from what has now been said, that the missionary labors of Mr. Wieting were fruitless. Far from it. There were, indeed, no general revivals, but there were individual conversions, not a few. It is true we now look over that field in vain for churches which he organized. But he broke up "fallow ground" which others cultivated; he sowed much good seed from which bountiful harvests have been gathered. In a "Sketch of a Missionary Tour," from which quotations have already been made, Dr. Hazelius speaks of the congregations "under the care of our friend, the Rev. Mr. Wieting," as "in a flourishing situation."

About ten years after he left that section of country, the writer commenced his ministerial career in an adjoining territory, to which Mr. Wieting's explorations had extended. Though his visits had been seldom, his preaching was remembered with interest. The people spake of his sermons as though they had listened to them

on the previous day. Not once nor twice was the remark made, "O, if we could have had Brother Wieting with us, we could easily have raised up a church." His memory was still fragrant. Several Christian men, prominent members of other churches, took pleasure in acknowledging that their first serious impressions had been produced by truths which he had uttered. Again and again it was the privilege of the writer to preach in barns and school-houses to throngs of people, many of whom had come a dozen or more miles to hear a young man—"a boy"—"who knew Bro. Wieting, and belonged to the same church."

During most of his stay at Lowville, Mr. Wieting found a home in the family of Mr. Boshart, a family with which he subsequently became connected by marriage. Mr. B. was a man of means, an earnest Christian and ardently devoted to the Lutheran denomination. After, however, all hope of establishing a church bearing the name of the great Reformer was given up, he, with the most of his family, united with the Presbyterian church of Lowville, in whose communion Mr. and Mrs.

Boshart both died, and of which several members of the family remain worthy communicants.

On the 3d of September, 1826, the New York Ministerium convened at *Cobleskill, Schoharie Co., N. Y.* Among others, Mr. Wieting was an applicant for ordination. The President in proposing the candidates, after mentioning their names, added, "With all of whose ministrations the congregations under their respective care have expressed due approbation." The vote to ordain was unanimous; and on Tuesday, September 5th, "Jacob Berger, William J. Eyer, Philip Wieting and Francis H. Guenther" were set apart "as Ministers of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ —by the imposition of hands and prayer."

Mr. Wieting was a member of the fraternity of "Free and Accepted Masons." The connection must have been formed early in life. And it is pretty clear that at first he was not a little interested in and controlled by it. In after years he spoke of it rarely and cautiously; never, indeed, unless by some one else attention was called to it. The following was related to the writer as the

only instance in which Masonry had in any way benefited him:

He had an appointment in Jefferson Co., more than thirty miles from Lowville. In starting, he left himself just time enough to reach the place at the usual rate of traveling. He rode on horseback. He had not proceeded far before the horse became lame; so lame that he could not go on. He put up at the first hotel he came to; and upon examination found that the animal would not be in condition to move for several days. Here was a dilemma. The appointment must be met. To reach it on foot was impossible. Hire another horse he could not; funds would not admit of it. His countenance, ever expressive, clearly indicated his anxiety. The keeper of the house, observing it, by the usual sign of the order, inquired whether he was a Mason. The question was satisfactorily answered in the affirmative. The way was thus opened for him to make known his necessities. Merely as a brother man the landlord might have turned to him the cold shoulder; yet, as a brother Mason, he interested himself in

his behalf. The lame horse was to be cared for; another was furnished for the journey, and Mr. Wieting was assured that there would be no bills for him to pay.

He never formally renounced Masonry; though he allowed his connection with it to terminate by default. Its obligations were not recognized, its character was never defended. When the secrets of the order were disclosed he never denied them. Against the most fearful accusations, he made no attempt to shield it. So far from advising his friends to become Masons, he was always deeply dissatisfied if any did so. And especially was he decided in the opinion that ministers should never be Masons. His testimony upon this point was given to the writer during the last year of his life. Speaking of some of his own spiritual children, and of others in whose ministerial reputation and influence he felt particularly interested, who had joined the Masons, he expressed his surprise and sorrow at what he called their "folly."

In the midst of distractions and discouragements incident to such a charge, with scarcely any op-

portunity or prospect of appropriating the fruits of his labor, Mr. Wieting spent the first three years of his ministry. With the results of this protracted experiment he became thoroughly dissatisfied. Reasons for a change were increasing in number and in urgency. His preaching resources had been severely taxed without the means of replenishment. His friends, farther east, were anxious to have him nearer where they were. He was about to enter upon the marriage state, and very properly supposed that, as the lady of his choice was a member of his charge, to remain after taking this step, would be attended with more or less embarrassment. And, besides, marriage should imply *settlement*. So he seemed to view it; and as permanence here was not to be thought of, it was most befitting that his attention should be turned to some other field. Nor was the question of his future and his final home on earth left long undecided. An "effectual door" was opened for him, and the index finger of Providence pointed directly to it. He received and accepted a call from the churches of Sharon and

Durloch—afterwards New Rhinebeck, Schoharie Co., N. Y., and entered upon his pastoral duties November 1st, 1828. He was to receive a salary of $300, parsonage, and the use of one hundred acres of land. After making suitable arrangements for settlement, he returned to Lowville, and on the 23d of the same month and year he united in matrimony with *Miss Catharine Boshart*, with whom the joys and sorrows of life were shared until the tie then formed was sundered by the stroke of death to which he fell a victim.

The newly wedded pastor, with his youthful bride, now turned their faces towards their new, long home, whither we will soon follow them.

CHAPTER V.

MATRIMONIAL ALLIANCE.

Schoharie County was organized April 6th, 1795. It consisted of six towns. After fixing the boundaries and giving the names of the first five, the Act of Incorporation says:

"And all the residue or remaining part of the said county of Schoharie, shall be and continue a town by the name of Sharon."

So it seems that the beautiful town which bears this beautiful name was not only the last in the list, but that, after all the rest were constituted, it was made up of an unappropriated remainder.

New Rhinebeck—a section of what had previously been called *New Durloch*, afterwards a part of the town of *Carlisle* and now of the town of *Seward*—was a "local settlement composed of four families, whose family names were *Loucks*, *Engle*, *Kerker* and *Young*."

Sharon and *New Rhinebeck* were the two points

of interest in the pastorate of which Mr. Wieting was to take charge. As used ecclesiastically, these names denoted the churches in which he was to preach, situated about three miles apart.

Not farther back than 1828, that whole range of country, embracing an endless variety of hills and vales, presenting an endless variety of forms and sizes, elevations and depressions, must have been a comparative wilderness.

The *Parsonage* was on the "Glebe," located at *New Rhinebeck*. The church stood on one hill, the parsonage on another, a short distance apart with a "*gully*" between, through which a small stream endeavored to find its way. Suitably removed from both was a little rough looking barn, standing nearly on a level with the stream.

A lonesome church — a lonesome house— a lonesome barn—these three—no more, were the only buildings within seeing distance. And the loneliness of the place, in effect, seemed to be deepened by a sweep of hills in the rear, a pretty extensive piece of woodland immediately in front, and a somewhat pretentious

swamp a little beyond the barn. The "Glebe" was more forest than farm; as but a small portion of it was cleared and still less in a state of cultivation. A cross road, running from one neighborhood to another, and which many years later retained some specimens of primitive corduroy, was the only connection the parsonage had with the outside world; the only avenue through which human beings were brought within sight—unless they came "across lots." Aside from the sounds of life from within and around this lonely tenement, and the occasional rumbling of carriage wheels along the quiet road, the silence of the place for six days of the week, was only broken by domestic animals in the yards and fields, and by the beasts, birds and reptiles of the wood and marsh.

Of the size and general appearance of the *house of God* and of the *minister's house*, it will be sufficient to say that they were in keeping with the place and with their surroundings.

And now, that the descendants of these worthy sires, so much more favored at the present day,

may not misjudge and undervalue these early expressions of religious interest, it may be needful to say that it is not *possible* for first settlers to select locations and to furnish conveniences which will bear the criticisms of succeeding generations. When it is remembered that the corner stone of *New York* city, our great national metropolis, was first located at *Perth Amboy*, and that the foundations of *Chicago*, the commercial emporium of the West—it now must be added by way of qualification, this side of the Rocky Mountains—were laid at *Michigan City*, it surely cannot be a matter of surprise, that, while nearly the whole of Schoharie County, was a "waste howling wilderness," with openings here and there, a church and parsonage should have been located at New Rhinebeck.

Here, and *such*, was the *home* to which the new Pastor brought the Lady who had just become his bride.

At such a point it will not be out of place to linger beyond what may be necessary to merely glance at physical aspects. Standing within the

well defined "shadows" which "coming events cast before them," it is befitting to notice the—as yet—untried "forces" by which the future of Mr. Wieting's life and character are to be effected if not controlled.

And it is not well to entirely overlook the wonderful relations existing between mind and matter; between the physical and the moral; between *where* a man lives and *what* he becomes. The "heather hills of Scotia" alone could produce a Burns. A perfect specimen of English character can only be found in England. A native of the United States on the Continent of Europe ceases to be an American. And, notwithstanding New England's boast, that her peculiarities are ineffaceable and changeless, it is true that the sons of the Puritans on Western prairies, like the representatives from other portions of our country and the world, soon lose their sharply defined notions and habits, and enter, indistinguishably, into the conglomeration called "Western society." And so in the nature of things it ever must be. Physical causes have much to do with mental develop-

ment and moral character. It makes a difference over what objects the eyes daily roam. Things seen are sources of thought, and some things more decidedly than others, fix the attention and stir the powers of reason and imagination.

Mr. Wieting was not an *idealist*. He looked upon the useful side of things. He was more interested in the excellency of soil than in the splendor of scenery. Accordingly, it was of less consequence whether his home was on the hillside or in the valley; whether it was surrounded by ornamental trees and shrubs and blooming flowers, or by the plain and substantial farm fixtures of a retired country residence. Indeed, his preference always turned to the latter. And it was also true that the grandeur of mountain ranges, the majesty of a rushing torrent, the beauty of a gorgeous sunset, affected him not so much as did the scenes of Bethlehem, of Gethsemane, and Calvary. And yet, with him, as with every other man, "home included something more than a place to live in." Its influence upon his

mind and character, though imperceptible, was yet resistless. And it is certain that had the years of life at the New Rhinebeck Parsonage been spent elsewhere, the Rev. P. Wieting would have been a different man.

But the susceptibilities of his young *companion* were more delicate than his own. For many years that parsonage was the world to her. It was her first home in married life. It was the birth place of her children, endeared by a thousand experiences which can never fade from her memory. Notwithstanding, she will never outlive the sense of *loneliness*, of *home sickness*, which stole in upon her mind, at *first sight* of that sequestered spot.

The writer has been furnished with no pen pictures or verbal descriptions of the departure from Lowville; of the journey; of the arrival and reception at the parsonage. But it is evident enough that the pang of parting with family friends was felt; that the slow ride of a hundred miles and more by horse power, had its incidents; that the introduction, attended with nameless curiosities

and embarrassments, involved occurrences never forgotten. There was a time when either of the parties might have narrated them with much interest. But upon such themes both are silent now, one in death; the other in bereavement. There are those—and not a few—who would be delighted to look through this sunny period in the life of one to whom they subsequently became so tenderly attached. And such may wonder why no record of it can be made. A single word must suffice as an explanation. *Things of higher moment claimed and received his attention.* Our departed brother was a *worker;* and apart from his work, he wrote little. His surviving friends accordingly, must be reconciled to remain in ignorance about many of his affairs upon which he had no time to write.

Something more should here be said upon the subject of *marriage.* "It always," says one, "either makes or mars." The importance of some relations depends upon improvement; of others upon developments; of others upon the possible adjustments of other things. But marriage necessarily

involves an importance, which can scarcely be over-estimated, within itself. Without any regard to contingencies, character and usefulness are largely controlled by it. Sentiments, tastes, habits, aspirations, are all subject to matrimonial modifications. Nor is it possible to calculate with any degree of certainty what will be the character or extent of those modifications. No matter how fortunate the choice, the change may be for the better or for the worse. Whether entirely satisfied or entirely disappointed, the effect in either case may be desirable or disastrous. Let a man be captivated with the qualities and qualifications of his wife, and she may become an object of idolatrous devotion, to her injury and to his ruin. And the same result may be realized from an opposite experience. This is true of all men, not less of ministers than of others. And it is preeminently true of those in whose nature the social elements predominate. Such must become, in some sense, what their wives' peculiarities tend to make them, as well by the power of direct

influence as by the gratifications or dissatisfactions experienced on her behalf.

The relations of the sexes remain unexplained mysteries. From whatever point contemplated they defy the powers of comprehension. The more they are studied the more they seem to involve our entire nature, and the more mysterious they appear. The point sought to be reached may be discovered in thousands of cases, more or less of which occur daily. But perhaps the imagination here may be the best source of illustration.

What a world of interest is expressed by the word BRIDE! It pictures to the mind *woman* at the most lovely period of life. She has had—let it be supposed—sufficient experience to mature her mind, sufficient culture to refine her manners. She sustained the relations of daughter, sister, friend. She was one of a group between all of whom and herself existed strong and tender attachments. Her home was the centre of wealth, of purity, of confidence, of safety. All her wants were supplied; in all her liabilities she was protected.

In her family and in her more extended associations both sexes were represented. Here were father, brothers, gentlemen acquaintances; intelligent, polished, who esteemed it a privilege and an honor to minister to her necessities or her gratifications. And here she might have remained while she lived. She felt, and might feel that necessity did not require her to seek any other home. And remaining here, she felt, and might feel that she would be cared for, respected and loved.

A stranger found his way to that happy home. A brief and imperfect acquaintance was formed. He had neither fame nor fortune. The assurance of affection and fidelity were all he had to offer. The calling to which he was devoted promised neither rank nor riches. Seen in perspective, the future presented little besides privation, toil, self-denial, with "no certain dwelling-place."

For the companionship of this *stranger* this young lady has left that home.

The question may not now be asked, why she has done so, nor yet whether in doing so she has acted wisely. The only question to be enter-

tained here, is, what is likely to be the effect of such *devotion*, such *sacrifices*, upon the mind of a sensitive man, capable of full appreciation!

But in the marriage of a minister even this is not all. Whether right or wrong it is a fact that he is held responsible for his wife's habits and influence, and largely do his successes or failures depend upon the position she takes and the reputation she establishes. To an extent which is not realized from the relation in any other sphere, the wife of a minister materially increases or lessens the cares and perplexities of her husband; his hopes or fears; his burdens or blessings.

All these facts and liabilities—and more—must be taken into careful account in order to estimate properly the character and usefulness of an embassador of Christ.

Here Mr. Wieting must once more be left. The cares and duties of married life and of the pastoral relation were assumed at the same time. Everything was new. Strange faces were to be remembered; strange names were to be made familiar; strange families were to be visited;

strange customs and manners were to be encountered.

Leaving him and his young wife at the lonely parsonage, to manage domestic and professional life as best he can, before attempting to speak of results, the *religious aspects* of this new field will claim our attention.

CHAPTER VI.

STATE OF THE SHARON CHARGE.

Antagonisms and discouragements, upon some minds, have a reflex influence. In different persons they produce opposite results. No virtue becomes vigorous without encountering its opposite. Only those who are overcome are injured; all others are benefited by the contest. A strong and energetic character is developed, not less by its hindrances, than by its helps. Strikingly is this truth illustrated in the life and labors of Mr. Wieting.

Contemplated from the standpoint of the present day, the religious aspect of Schoharie County, forty years ago, seems dark and forbidding.

At the session of the New York Ministerium, held at Cobleskill, 1826—to which allusion has already been made—six churches are noticed, containing about 650 communicants. Of that

number 200 belonged to Sharon and New Durloch. What follows, applies to this charge.

Members were admitted to the church by catechisation; rarely, if ever, by relation of Christian experience. The usual course was for the pastor once or twice a year to announce a course of catechetical instruction. Any person was at liberty to avail himself of the instruction thus imparted. Portions of the catechism were committed to memory, and at meetings held for that purpose, those lessons were recited by the members of the class and explained by the pastor. During this time of pupilage, and for a limited period thereafter, catechumen were expected to avoid places of public amusement and refrain from improprieties in their conduct. After the course of instruction was completed, they were received into the church and to the communion. Whether anything was said to them respecting a "change of heart" beyond the language of the book, depended upon the views and disposition of the pastor; as there seemed to be neither rule nor precedent requiring it. And that making a "change of heart" the

condition of church membership, was "an unheard of occurrence" previous to the commencement of Mr. Wieting's ministry, is a statement which rests upon unquestionable authority. Subsequently, the practice of catechisation was wholly abandoned and has never been revived. And even down to the present hour there is cherished against it a strong feeling of opposition. After God graciously poured out his spirit upon the people and many souls were brought into the kingdom by the "new and living way," *catechisation* and *conversion* were viewed as antagonisms. Hostility to the former became deep and determined just in proportion to the importance which was attached to the latter. And these impressions were produced mainly, if not entirely, by the use previously made of the catechism. And so it often happens that the ardent friends of a particular measure, by being over sanguine and exclusive, furnish the strongest argument against it.

In this case, however, prejudice is as unfounded and as unreasonable as was the practice by which it was occasioned. Education is not religion, nor

can it be made a substitute for it. But religion necessarily involves *education* and therefore can never ignore it. Because some wholly depend upon the catechism, why should others wholly throw it aside? Abuse is no evidence of worthlessness. To admit a person to the privileges of the church solely because he understands the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, is simply absurd. To receive and to retain members in the church in ignorance of these doctrines, or to suppose that regeneration supersedes the necessity of such knowledge, or imparts it without the use of the ordinary means is, to say the least, equally absurd. Doubtless, the multiplication of religious books, the amount of regular preaching now enjoyed, and especially the almost universal establishment of Sabbath-schools and Bible classes, largely supersede the necessity which formerly existed for catechetical instruction. Nevertheless, there is no more propriety in throwing aside the catechism than there is in throwing aside the creed. If the reasons mentioned justify the one, they do the other. The catechism, properly con-

sidered, is an elementary church book, and should be allowed to have its appropriate place. And as things are now constituted, that place is evidently in the Sabbath-school, where it is altogether too much neglected.

It ought to be added that, in theory, Mr. Wieting was never opposed to catechisation; but after discarding it as a means of introducing members into the church, the favorable opportunity for resorting to it as a means of instruction never seemed to be afforded.

Respecting the *spirituality* of these churches at this time, the statement of a single fact, resting upon reliable authority, may be sufficient. At Rhinebeck there was *one*, who was known to be a praying member; at Sharon there were *five*. To the credit of the *five*, let it be recorded that *they met for social worship*. This practice was *secretly* introduced to avoid anticipated opposition. Their meetings were held at private houses, and usually not more than *three* took part in the exercises. They were accustomed to read a sermon or a part of one, sing, offer prayer and dismiss.

But these gatherings, small as they were and quietly as they were conducted, called forth the most determined opposition. Those who attended them were denounced as "*Methodists*," and were looked upon as the most dangerous fanatics. It was either at this time or a little later that, with reference to some unusual manifestation of religious interest, one of the members of the church declared that, "If things were to go on at this rate, he would take his *musket* to meeting."

All the immoralities and even vices then prevalent were not only countenanced but, to a greater or less extent, practiced by members of the church. Profane swearing, Sabbath-breaking, horse-racing, gambling, drunkenness, dancing, licentiousness, quarreling, fighting, and similar indulgences, were by no means uncommon. New dwellings were dedicated by what was called a "*house-warming*"—a dance. Intoxicating drinks were not only used at weddings, but also freely at funerals. A respected member of the Gardnersville Church, from whom much valuable information has been received, recently stated to

the writer that when his grandfather was buried, after the service and the refreshments furnished upon the occasion, two persons, a man and a woman, each with a decanter and glasses, were stationed at the doors, who served the congregation with liquor as they passed out. Both men and women drank without restraint. Even cases of actual drunkenness now and then occurred on funeral occasions. These things were really thought little of. To be a Christian was to be a member of the church and "to go to sacrament." Profanity was less objectionable than prayer; and the ball-room was preferable to the prayer meeting. In the church and in the community the standard of morality was about the same. What would now be looked upon as unendurable irregularities, were then practiced by members without compunction, without rebuke, without reproach.

The state of things thus briefly described as existing in the churches of which Mr. Wieting was about to take charge, was well nigh an universal characteristic of that epoch; and few indeed were the churches in which, to a greater or less extent,

it did not obtain. It was neither limited to locality nor to denomination. It was one of those dark periods of which, in the history of the church, so many are found. The population of that day were not "sinners above all men" because their views were so crude and their habits so objectionable. Those unfavorable developments were owing largely to the "badness of the times." It was one of those peculiar conjunctures during which the illuminating and correcting powers of Christianity seem to be suspended or overcome, affording evil and error for the time being, undisputed supremacy. In justice to all concerned it is due that some explanation of the state of religion at this date, and especially in this particular section, should be attempted. And perhaps this may be the most appropriate place.

Christianity involves essential facts, principles, and obligations. With these the system, as such, must stand or fall. If one is false, none can be true. And—if the expression may be allowed—these *constituent elements* are as fixed in their number as in their nature. They neither admit of

addition, diminution, nor modification. They did not originate with the church, nor has she any authority over them. Against these elements, creeds and confessions are as valueless as they are powerless. The privilege, the right, the duty of the church, is to receive, to proclaim and to defend them, just as they were given by Jesus Christ and his inspired apostles. In themselves considered, the laws of development and progress have no application to them; nor are they in the least affected by the discoveries of science or the fluctuations of speculative theories. The same to all, the same always, the same everywhere.

But these essential features of Christianity, however, make up but a small part of the system, taken as a whole. As separate unities, the foundation and the superstructure bear about the same comparison in respect to magnitude as do the corresponding parts of a material structure:—a comparison sanctioned by apostolic phraseology. The object of the foundation is the support of the superstructure. Accordingly it requires solidity and durability; and these important character-

istics may not be sacrificed for taste or convenience.

But respecting the materials, arrangements and style of the superstructure; its fixtures and its furniture, uniformity may give place to variety.

Accordingly, to distinguish between what is fundamental and what is non-fundamental in the Christian system, is indispensable. The foundation has been laid simply and solely by Divine authority. Here doubt must be excluded; speculations may not be indulged; taste can claim no distinctive gratification; differences of opinion may not be tolerated. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." There is but one alternative: to accept the foundation, or to reject the system.

Building upon this foundation comes legitimately within the scope of human arrangements. Though coupled with a caution, yet permission is given without discrimination. "Let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon." Subject only to the teachings of the Holy Scriptures, each one not only *may* but *must* build for himself.

Deprecate them as we may, in the practical developments of Christianity, there will be *diversities*. And they are legitimately traceable to two facts, neither of which can be overlooked or ignored. The one is, *there is a difference between men*. They are differently constituted; they are differently situated; they are differently educated; as a consequence, they think differently, have different tastes to gratify and different interests to subserve. The other is, *God has invested every man with the power and the right to be governed by his own convictions*. The individual conscience, acknowledging ultimate accountability only to the great Head of the Church, is the only basis of Christian character which the Scriptures recognize. And where the "true light" shines the uncorrupted moral sense of man accepts the essential doctrines of the "Cross," as readily as his physical nature accepts the necessity of food to sustain life. But respecting religious *proprieties*, men will differ, as in their preferences of the palate, they differ in regard to food.

"Unity in variety," accordingly, is the only

basis upon which Christian organizations, as such, can be established. About essentials, God's children seldom differ; about non-essentials they seldom agree.

It must be evident, then, that the Christian religion, as conceived of and represented by men, will be *changeable*, just in proportion as it is progressive. The human mind comprehends the stupendous system but in part. At one time prominence is given to what is to be *believed;* at another time, to what is to be *experienced;* at another, to what is to be *practiced.* Of course, in theory, neither faith, experience, nor practice is ever discarded; but as essential to Christian character, *all*, at the *same time*, are seldom required. And it is because the insufficiency of the one without the other is felt, that the one is abandoned for the other. In the heat of controversy, or by the force of exciting circumstances, individuals and communities may be satisfied to rest their religious hopes upon either a distinctive creed, a particular type of moral feeling, or upon a given class of services. But upon a foundation so narrow, the sense of

security cannot last long. The need of something more must soon be felt, and the inconsistency of exalting one class of characteristics to the exclusion of others of perhaps equal importance, must either be abandoned or become the occasion of embarrassment and of reproach. And such are the tendencies of our nature that alternation from one extreme to the other, seems to be a matter of course, if not of necessity.

Now, history and observation alike prove that, in accordance with these principles, the *advancement* of Christianity, as exhibited by visible results, has never been *direct* and *uniform*. At one time it excites general interest, at another, it is treated with universal indifference. Here, during a limited period, the church receives large accessions; there, during the same period, she loses rather than gains. Then, the standard of intelligence, benevolence, zeal, self-denial, was elevated; now, "darkness covers the land and gross darkness the minds of the people." As "the salt loses its savor," the membership of the church sink into formality, and perhaps with the masses,

into worldliness and profligacy. The "form of godliness" is retained, the "power" is lost. Such was the state of things when Elijah made supplication to "God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life."

The length to which these reflections have already been extended, renders it improper to follow out the principles set forth to their inevitable consequences. Nor can it be necessary. When both *causes* and *effects* are obvious, and the one answers exactly to the other, the intermediate process is of less account. The conclusion sought to be arrived at is, that, from the nature of the Christian religion, from the constitution of the human mind, and from the force of circumstances, in the present condition of things, the church is liable to alternate from the extreme of prosperity to the extreme of adversity. And accepting this conclusion as a general explanation of the religious degeneracy of Sharon and New Rhinebeck in 1828, no one can fail to interpret the purposes of

God in sending his servant there at that fearful extremity.

Other facts, too, there are, whose material bearings upon the state of religion at that time and in that place, should, at least, be briefly noticed.

The particular type of *Lutheranism* which obtained at that time—perhaps it might be safe to say—throughout the country, was not *indigenous*. It was not, to any great extent, the product of American culture. The difficulties, since so largely experienced, in the attempt to blend in the same religious organizations European and American peculiarities, were, even then, a source of embarrassment. The views prevalent respecting the church, the privileges and obligations of members, as also the relative positions of morality and religion, were mainly derived from establishments combining Church and State. And though the fathers of Lutheranism in Schoharie and elsewhere—many of them at least—were driven to this country by religious persecution, it is not surprising that they retained not a few of their early impressions.

It should be remembered also, that new settlements are not usually in the best condition to develop a sound morality or a pure religion. In this depraved and distracted world, *excellence*, of whatever character, is the fruit of careful culture.

Sad experience sufficiently proves that, left to itself, human nature tends decidedly from bad to worse. Accordingly, where a heterogeneous population are herded together by the force of circumstances; where the church is not effectively organized; where the stated means of grace are not enjoyed; where the motives and restraints of the gospel are only occasionally and imperfectly enforced, religion will degenerate, morality will be loosely held, and the vices natural to the different grades of the people will gain ascendancy. However good the seed, if it falls among thorns, at some stage of its growth, it is sure to be choked.

Nor should it be forgotten that not more than a dozen years had passed since the close of the war of 1812. The demoralizing influence was still felt; less, it may be, in this interior section

of the State, than elsewhere; yet deeply realized. The religion of the country was not then prepared, as it now is, to encounter the desolating torrents of iniquity consequent upon warlike convulsions. Nevertheless, our own sad experience at the present time may qualify us to judge charitably of the defections of those, who, under less favorable circumstances, realized similar trials.

"It is the glory of God to conceal a thing." How many would shrink from life's glorious mission did they but know in part what it involves! As the review of his long pastoral record will fully prove, Mr. Wieting made no mistake in going to Sharon and New Rhinebeck. But, if at the commencement, he could have foreseen what awaited him, with all his faith, fervor and moral courage, would he have acquiesced in his allotment? Perhaps he would. It is pleasant to think that even then, he might have adopted as his own, the beautiful language of the Apostle, upon which the sermon preached at his coffin was founded: "*None of these things move me.*" Yet, it is easy to see the wisdom of that plan by which,

in his case as in our own, the troublous future is concealed. Looking with inexperienced eyes only upon the surface of things, and relying confidently upon the precious promise—"Lo, I am with you alway"—he went hopefully to his work.

But there was an undercurrent, the direction of which was here and there clearly indicated even upon the surface. This deep darkness proclaimed the coming dawn. Evil had reached its ultimate, and "the remainder of wrath was to be restrained." The agencies to be mentioned were appreciated; but it is not likely that their connection with coming results was then understood. That an important connection existed, no one now can doubt.

During the month of February, 1827, a small periodical was inaugurated. Its title was, "*The Lutheran Magazine*," and it was published by an "*Association of Lutheran Clergymen*." After recognizing the principle that "Providence" designs the existence of "various denominations," and specifying several whose "Confessions of Faith" were in circulation among the people, in their

"*Introduction*," they say: "To lay before the same enlightened public, the views of the LUTHERAN CHURCH, on these important subjects; to give a sketch of the history, the extent and institutions of the church, and of whatever else may be interesting and useful to know concerning it, both to the general reader, as well as its own members, shall be the principal object of this Magazine." An important step, this, in the right direction. The *Press* was to aid the *Pulpit* in diffusing light.

A good beginning had already been made in the work of *Domestic Missions*. This subject seemed to lie very near the heart of the venerable Dr. Hazelius, who, in addition to all his other cares and duties, like the great Apostle, made frequent tours over the country, exploring new fields and preparing the way for the establishment of Churches. The Rev. G. A. Lintner, then pastor of the church of Schoharie, and in the strength and vigor of early manhood, was also ardently devoted to this work. Upon him, perhaps, more than upon any other one, depended the direction

given to it; as Dr. Hazelius soon left Hartwick for another seat of learning, Dr. Lintner remained, and not only saw the fields white, but assisted in gathering in the glorious harvest. And most gratifying indeed must it be to him now, in the "late evening of his life," to draw from the not musty memories of the past the facts which exhibit the "fruits of revivals."

This missionary spirit, at a little later period, was appropriately embodied in an organization known as the "Domestic Missionary Society of the Lutheran Church in the State of New York."

In the month of October, 1830, a convention of "clerical and lay representatives, from different churches, convened at Schoharie," the result of whose deliberations was the organization of the "*Hartwick Synod*." How this movement was regarded by some others, may be seen by the statement of the *Rev. D. F. Shaeffer*, of Frederick, Maryland. He says, "If any circumstance is calculated to convince our readers that the cause of the Lord is advancing in our Zion, this is." Undoubtedly. There was "new wine" which re-

quired "new bottles." Diffusive elements must have room for expansion. This was simply the bursting of the bud whose formation and growth were the products of previous years, the full bloom, fragrance, and fruitage of which were subsequently realized. The organization of this body was proof of progress and the means of great good.

Another encouraging feature—the last to be named—was the fact that the ministry was filling up with a different class of men. It cannot here be necessary to guard against misapprehension. The principle is too well established to admit of doubt, that not only every country, but that every distinct section of country, to be permanently successful, must raise up and qualify its own ministers. Let not one suspicious thought be cherished, not one disparaging word be spoken against that noble, self-denying band of German divines, who planted the seeds of Lutheranism in this Western soil. They are most appreciated by those who understand them best. Many of them were peculiarly good men, and well did they perform the peculiar work assigned them. But *more* men and *other*

men were needed; nor did the Great Head of the Church leave that want unsupplied. Whether, in some subordinate sense, events produce men, or men produce events, is a question of little moment. In the important sense, God produces both. A crisis was now approaching and suitable men were needed to meet it. Some were already in the field; others were soon to enter. Among them the name of Mr. Wieting deserves an honorable place. What that place should be, the reader will be better prepared to judge after carefully studying the part he performed.

CHAPTER VII.

CALL AND FIRST COMMUNION.

Sometime, probably, during the year 1827, the churches of Sharon and New Rhinebeck, became vacant. The documents from which it might be determined how long they remained so, are not at hand.

Under the most favorable circumstances, it is a severe trial for a church to be without a pastor. As these churches were situated the trial was peculiarly severe, and by some of the members deeply felt. There were those, of course, who were indifferent; others were discouraged; and others so much dissatisfied that they left the church. Some of the most prominent members and families of the Methodist Church at the present time, are the fruits of that disaffection. How loosely church relations are held! How imperfectly covenant vows and obligations are understood and recognized! Just as though diffi-

culties in one branch were a sufficient reason for flying to another? Sad, sad mistake.

But many good people are easily discouraged. There were others who meditated the same step, not because they had lost their interest in Lutheranism, nor because they were captivated with the peculiarities of Methodism; but because there appeared to be a little spiritual life in the one and less in the other. Those who were influenced by that fact then might be instructed by instituting a comparison now. How unkind, how unchristian, for one church to take the advantage of the mistakes or the misfortunes of another! How often it is done! There were several with whom strong efforts were made to induce them to transfer their membership. That humble, unassuming, but devoted man, JOHN EMPIE was one of them. He was the honored father of the noble family bearing the name, so many of the members of which have been ornaments and pillars in the church ever since. A worthy son of that venerable father, is to-day a fearless and faithful standard bearer on the walls of Zion. Speaking of his

now sainted parent, this esteemed brother in Christ says, "Father was at that time not far from fifty years old. He had professed experimental piety a little over twenty years. He was anxious, of course, for a better state of things in the Church." He could not be prevailed upon to leave it, hoping still that a "better day would come." Though he saw nothing to "indicate a change" yet he resolved to "stand by the ship." This resolution was strengthened, not a little, by a singular but significant *dream*. It is not worth while to stop and discuss the phenomena of dreams, nor to attempt to settle the question whether any confidence should be reposed in them. They not unfrequently suggest thought and invest it with influence. Hence, considered philosophically, dreams may be the means of either good or evil. And so long as inspired precedent is not transcended, no apologies are needed for giving due attention to them.

Mr. Empie dreamed that he saw a large fruit tree. Many of its branches were leafless, and apparently dead. Only a few—here and there

one—gave signs of life and vigor. He noticed the tree with much interest and was surprised that in such a manner the living should be found among the dead! He gave himself up to observation and reflection, determined to understand the secret of what seemed so mysterious. After waiting but a little the aspect of the tree began to change. The living limbs looked more beautiful; those which had seemed to be dead furnished indications of life. Many young and tender branches sprung out among the old ones, and the entire tree was covered with foliage and presented the appearance of life and thrift. If any of the limbs were really dead, they were completely concealed by the living ones.

He awoke, and in thinking of his dream, became deeply impressed. It occurred to him, "That tree is our Church. All but a very few are spiritually dead. But who knows whether this tree, now so nearly gone, may not yet be restored to life!" The dream had a powerful effect upon his mind. He was encouraged to pray, and confidently expected soon to see a change. Nor was he diappointed.

During the time that the church was without preaching, "a congregational meeting was called," to ascertain the minds of the members respecting a pastor. "Several names were proposed," but with reference to none of them was there any decision. Some cared little whether a minister was obtained or not, while others, though anxious, had no definite impression either as to who could be secured or who was needed. The name of "Brother Wieting," occurred to "Father Empie." He had never seen him, but he had heard favorably of him. Mentioning him to the meeting, he said, "I hear that he is a young man of talent, of much energy, and of undoubted piety. Let us invite him to visit us; and after seeing and hearing him, we shall be able to act understandingly." The proposition, taken as a motion, was seconded by *Dr. J. C. Moeller*, and adopted by the meeting. The name of Mr. Wieting was probably never thought of by those present before it was proposed by "Father Empie," nor by him until every other name had been dropped and there seemed to be no one to whom attention could be directed.

As when the sons of Jesse passed before Samuel, so here, the last called was accepted. There was no rivalry between parties, each anxious to give prominence to some favorite; no canvassing to carry points. Well would it have been for the church in all its branches, if this simple method of procedure had been perpetuated. *Candidating* has become a religious nuisance. The eagerness manifested and the management resorted to by ministers to secure positions are most discreditable to the profession. And only amid the wranglings of politicians can a parallel to the conduct of some churches be found. And if present tendencies continue to develop, the time must soon come when no minister can maintain his self-respect, and allow himself to become a candidate. Through this embarrassing ordeal, Mr. Wieting never passed but once; it cannot, therefore, be out of place to notice his experience in it.

He accepted the invitation to visit the churches, and on his arrival was received at the residence of *Dr. Moeller*. Here Mr. Empie and others called upon him. *Sight* is always the first point

of interest, and in this instance it was not altogether satisfactory. His *physique* at that time of life surely could not have made any unfavorable impressions; but he appeared timid, awkward, reserved. Father Empie shook his head with misgivings, and to some confidential friends expressed his fears that the young man would not do. The Sabbath dawned; the day of trial. It was fair, and the house was crowded. He came in rather late and rushed through the audience as if in great haste to reach the pulpit. During some part of the introductory exercises he lost his self-possession, and fears began to prevail that he would make a perfect failure. But in his prayer he rose above restraint, and secured the sympathy of his hearers. They were now in condition to expect something from him. When he announced his text—"Marvel not that I say unto thee, ye must be born again"—the audience was startled. It was, indeed, a bold venture. Few young men should attempt to grapple with such a subject, especially, upon such an occasion. The audience, he knew, had but little sympathy

with it. As has already been said, those who entertained the hope that they had "passed from death unto life," were denounced as Methodists and avoided as fanatics. It is not likely that he took this text with the intention of rebuking formality; but it is more than probable that he was prompted to express his views upon it by a sense of fidelity. He well understood that the people were anxious not only to gauge his capacity and judge of his manner, but also to get some idea of his sentiments. Accordingly, he placed himself directly upon the issue existing between ceremonialism and experimental godliness, and fearlessly took his position. The wisdom of this step may be questioned; its ingenuousness must be commended. This, in fact, was the great theme of his preaching through life. His experience, his convictions of its importance, had probably caused him to study it carefully, and perhaps at that time no other subject was better understood. Nor in this connection should the principle be either overlooked or ignored, that "the preparations of the heart and the answer of the tongue

is from the Lord." Seen from any stand point of carnal policy or human prudence, Luther's conduct in nailing his theses to the church door, was preposterous and rash. So was the course of Paul in going up to Jerusalem in the face of evidence which caused him to exclaim, "Bonds and afflictions abide me." But what is sometimes called *prudence* is but another name for cowardice. Not to go beyond the dictates of unaided reason is to practically discard the doctrine of faith. Faith involves risks which reason will not assume.

How far Mr. Wieting was governed by Divine guidance in the selection of his subject for that occasion, it is not possible, of course, to determine. That he sought direction from God, can hardly be questioned; and to suppose that the promise of the "Great Commission," "Lo, I am with you always," was fulfilled to him then, is neither unreasonable nor improbable. At all events, the result shows that the theme did not transcend the abilities of the preacher, nor the comprehension of the audience. If the people did

not endorse the sentiment of the sermon, they were captivated with the energetic and masterly manner of its presentation. They were not only satisfied with but controlled by the effort. The necessity for consultation was superseded. There was but one opinion and of that general appearances were a sufficient indication. The few earnest Christians who had prayed for a spiritual shepherd, felt that their prayers had been heard and answered. And all were pleased with the prospect of securing the services of a man of such ability.

Of what happened the reader has already been informed.

Nothing of special interest occurred in this newly assumed charge, between November, 1828, and the following spring. Congregations were usually large, attentive and solemn; and though there were certain classes to which his preaching was not always palatable, yet the show of talent was so satisfactory and the current of public feeling so strong in his favor, that there was little opportunity to nourish dissatisfaction and less to

express it. He was diligent and indiscriminate in his pastoral visitations, unhesitating and prompt in responding to all claims for service. Mutual acquaintance extended and confidence increased. He was effectually doing a much needed preparatory work; breaking up the fallow ground, and bountifully sowing the good seed. Mr. Wieting was too fearful of failure to be precipitate in the use of decisive measures, or he might, perhaps, during the first season, have pressed things forward to a crisis. It was doubtless wise to wait. Thoroughness of preparation is the grand secret of complete success. The "set time to favor Zion" had not yet come; and whether God regulated developments through the judgment of his servant or by the force of circumstances, there was no resort, at this time, to extraordinary measures.

As the spring communion approached, four persons applied for membership by *catechisation*. This brought up, in a practical form, the troublesome question whether any but those who gave evidence of genuine conversion, might be received

into the church. In the pastor's mind this question was very clearly settled. He had fully arrived at the conclusion that the church is a body of believers; that the ordinances are not means of regeneration, but means of grace to the regenerated; and that, accordingly, they should only be administered to such, except baptism to infants. Upon the subject of *infant baptism*, Mr. Wieting never entertained a doubt. He preached and practiced it during the whole of his ministry. But that no adults, unless they were believers, were entitled to sacramental privileges, was a doctrine which involved, not only his understanding but his conscience. This was his position.

But of this view of things the church had no knowledge. They had never received members upon evidence of conversion, they never had rejected any as catechumen. Long standing and far reaching usage sustained this practice. The pastor was accordingly subjected to a very severe trial. If he received the applicants by catechisation, he compromised his conscience and committed himself to that mode of procedure. If he

rejected them, he had good reason to think that the church, almost as a whole, would take ground against him, of the consequences of which he could form no conception.

"Man's extremity is God's opportunity." From the pressure of this relentless alternative Mr. Wieting saw no escape. And the burden increased as the occasion approached. He resolved, indeed, to honor his convictions; but just how to dispose of the pending issue, he could not satisfy himself. But relief came in due time. It was as unexpected as it was gracious. During the morning of the day—Saturday before communion—on the afternoon of which the whole matter was to be decided, the joyful tidings reached him that one of the four had "found peace in believing." Scarcely was there time for his mind to become quieted, before another of the number made his appearance, manifesting great anxiety as to whether or not he was to be received into the church. Encouraged by the good news he had just received, the pastor ventured to question him about the state of his mind. It was a new thing

and the dear man hardly knew how to meet it. But as the scriptural evidences of a change of heart were unfolded, his countenance brightened, and after a serious struggle as to what he should say about himself, he finally exclaimed, "*I feel those evidences now.*" And by further inquiry, the pastor became satisfied that the declaration was not without foundation. His faith was strengthened, and he no longer feared to meet the crisis, though divested of none of its difficulties.

He went to the house of worship at the appointed time, and upon conversing with the other two applicants, he found to his great surprise that their minds had been seriously exercised, and that, not knowing what else to do, they had been prompted by the concern felt for their salvation to offer themselves as candidates for membership in the church. One, after suitable instructions seemed somewhat clear as to the ground of his hope. The case of the other was more or less doubtful, though deeply penitent and sighing for deliverance from the burden of sin.

All the facts were now before him, and the

time had come when action could no longer be deferred. The case in all its aspects was invested with indescribable interest, though crowded with increasing perplexities. God had evidently taken the matter in his own hand, and he saw what to expect but not what to do. Two difficult questions must be decided, and what had happened suggested no solution. The three were to be received; but how? As *catechumen*, or as *converts?* The catechism could be recognized while yet conversion was made the ultimate test. Would this be best? And the fourth—what was to be done with him? Should the application be postponed? Perhaps, on the whole, this would have been the safer course; yet it was not adopted. Should the applicant be encouraged to rest on the faint hope he had, especially, as there seemed to be some ground for hope? Deception was feared. Indeed it would have been an unwarrantable venture. Should he be dealt with faithfully as to the state of his mind, and be admitted as a catechumen? This was the decision. The three were received as giving evidence of a change of heart

without any regard to the catechism. And in adopting this course, the pastor took occasion to fully and firmly declare his sentiments and his determination never thereafter to depart from them. In receiving the other as a catechumen, he properly represented the state of his mind and the reason there was to hope that he soon might become a child of grace. But he frankly admitted that he received him in this manner, against his own convictions, in deference to the known views and former usages of the church.

Thus was this troublesome affair disposed of, and here was the end of catechisation in this charge. So far as is known, the church took no exceptions to the pastor's course. Whether satisfied or not they were silent. And not until difficulties of another character found their way among them was there any agitation about the manner of admitting members to the church.

That communion was an event of memorable interest. God manifestly designed to honor the course his servant had taken, and to crown his efforts with complete success. The whole congre-

gation was overwhelmed. The sanctuary was a *Bochim*. The tears of the oldest members and the tears of those newly born into the kingdom—the first visible fruits of the pastor's labors—blended. Such a time had never before been witnessed. And the universal impression seemed to be, "It is the Lord's doing; and marvellous in our eyes." The effect did not end with the meeting. The work went on, and many who were subsequently brought to Christ, dated their convictions of sin back to that communion.

Grace triumphed; God was glorified.

CHAPTER VIII.

GATHERING CLOUDS.

The great work of Mr. Wieting's ministerial life had now fairly commenced. He had found a foothold; he had declared his distinctive sentiments; he had taken his position. It was generally understood that it was his aim, not to build up the Church as it was, but to reform it. The sources whence opposition was to be expected were clearly indicated, and the issue, on his part at least, was pretty thoroughly defined. Thus far every thing had moved on smoothly and encouragingly. The seal of God's approbation had been received; and, though it was evident that the Church as a whole were not pleased with all his movements, yet, up to this time, no dissatisfaction had been openly manifested. Many prominent members he knew were heartily with him, and the number was constantly on the increase. But even now it is not difficult to see that some

reaction was inevitable. It came; and in a manner not to be trifled with. It is true, indeed, the good work did not entirely cease. Conversions were frequent, accessions to the Churches somewhat numerous. During this year—1829, there were 37 additions to the Sharon Church, and nearly or quite half that number to the Church at New Rhinebeck. Yet, as the line of distinction became more apparent, the contest between the spiritual and the formal elements in the Church became more determined. If the former were gaining in numbers and strength, the latter were increasing in activity and boldness.

The progress of Christianity involves contention. It was the declaration of the great Founder, that he came not to "send peace but the sword." The "carnal mind is enmity against God." And much of this enmity has, during every age, found its way into the Church. Hence the contest has not usually been between the nominal Church and the world. In all serious religious controversies, the nominal Church has been divided. In other words, the world has been represented in the

Church; and hence what has been called the Church has commonly furnished the belligerents and the battle-ground. In all such cases, therefore, there are, within the bosom of the Church itself, active antagonists awaiting collision to test their relative strength and express their mutual aversion. And as there are feelings to be gratified and interests to be subserved, either old issues will be revived or new ones will be introduced. Nor is there an instance on record in which a party obviously and entirely in the wrong, abandoned its position without a struggle. That persons and parties cling to and maintain their selfish interests against their clearest convictions, is a fact so frequently exemplified as to admit of no doubt. Said the Jews respecting Jesus, "What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation." They confessed Christ's wonder-working power, and their own ruinous inactivity. And yet, instead of guarding against their deprecated liabilities by

self-reform, they sought to avoid them by self-defence: that is, not by doing something themselves, but by opposing the well-doing of the Master.

And a similar disposition was exemplified in Mr. Wieting's charge. The first opposition encountered was in regard to the *Prayer Meeting*. And this was an old difficulty revived. Social religious meetings had been established, and stoutly withstood previous to his coming. But as an effect of his earnest ministry and fostering care, they greatly increased in numbers and in power. He was not reluctant to have it understood that he regarded the prayer meeting as embracing a part of his own work. He treated it, not as something which *might* be tolerated, but as something which *must* be sustained. He noticed all such gatherings from the pulpit; urged the people to attend them, and always, when practicable, took charge of them himself.

About this time they became exceedingly interesting. The multitude thronged them, and were not only moved while there, but carried the

influence with them to their homes and their business. Convictions of sin were deep and lasting, and not unfrequently the song of deliverance blended with the sigh of penitence.

Of course, under such circumstances, opposition felt would be likely to find expression. "See," said the disaffected members, "what is going on here. These meetings multiply; every body is running to them; and if we let Wieting alone, he will soon control the whole Church, and what will become of us." Accordingly the meetings and the minister were alike assailed. They called him, and all who sided with him, "Methodists and fanatics"—the worst names they could think of—and threw every possible obstacle in their way. Their great desire was to break up those detested *prayer meetings*. And an expedient was finally hit upon which seemed to them to promise success. The excellent Dr. Hazelius of Hartwick Seminary, was universally respected. His position was influential, and his views were invested with a species of authority. It was supposed that he would not favor such meetings, and

that if he decided against them, they must be abandoned. He was accordingly written to and requested to visit the Church. The representations made, were to the effect that certain meetings were held week after week, in which there was much disorder; that the pastor encouraged these meetings; and that they were causing great excitement among the people and disturbance in the Church. And there was, indeed, the semblance of truth about these statements. As viewed by the complainants, all prayer meetings were disorderly. And it was true that they were producing considerable excitement and some disturbance. Sinners were disturbed in their carnal security, and these misguided members in their spiritual slumbers. But it was not true that there was any distraction in the Church, except what was occasioned by these members themselves. Strange that the cause should complain of the effect!

The Peacemaker, whose aid had been invoked, soon appeared upon the ground. And, whether it was because his feelings were a little irritated respecting his pupil by what he had heard, or

from considerations of policy, he did not at first seek the hospitalities of the parsonage. But Mr. Wieting soon heard of the arrival of his much respected Preceptor, and called upon him immediately. Of course, he was received in the most friendly and courteous manner. The Doctor frankly stated the occasion and the object of his visit, and as frankly inquired whether there was any foundation for what he had heard. As it happened, there was to be a prayer meeting that evening. And, instead of going into an extended history of affairs, with characteristic shrewdness, Mr. Wieting, informing him of that fact, said to him, "Go and see for yourself." He reminded him that he would have the best of opportunities for satisfying himself, as it was not known that he was in the place, that he could be present without being recognized; and that to relieve him of all embarrassment, he himself would remain at home. The proposition impressed the Doctor favorably, and he at once resolved to act upon the suggestion.

The meeting was largely attended. The vene-

rable Professor quietly found a seat among the spectators in the rear of the room. A little surprise was manifested at the absence of the pastor, as it seemed he was expected. But without much delay the exercises were commenced. There was more than usual interest. No time was lost. Prayer succeeded prayer in unbroken succession, and each exceeded the preceding in faith and fervor. There was much freedom, much depth of devotion, much apparent humility, much earnestness. In a subdued manner, the groan of anxiety and the sigh of desire were occasionally heard, but there was nothing suggestive of disorder or confusion. There was some speaking. It consisted of brief statements relating to Christian experience, about which there were points of thrilling interest, but nothing which bordered upon extravagance.

The Doctor soon became something more than an observer or a critic. His understanding was satisfied and his heart was moved. He became a fellow worshipper, silently drinking in the spirit of the meeting with soul-satisfying delight. His

general appearance and expressions of interest attracted some attention and led some to suppose that he might perhaps take some part, though no allusions were made to him. As the meeting was about to close, he rose to his feet. Of course, every eye was fixed upon him, and great was the wonder as to who he could be. But curiosity was quickly gratified. He told them who he was, and why he was there. He told them how much pleased he was to find such a state of things among them, and how much he was pained to know that it had provoked opposition. He exhorted them to sustain their meetings; to hold up the hands of their young pastor; to be kind and patient towards those who were unfriendly to their movements.

The next morning the Professor and his pupil once more met. That meeting was one of mutual satisfaction. Dr. Hazelius informed Mr. Wieting how much he had been delighted with what he had seen and heard the evening before. He begged him not to be disturbed or discouraged by any hostile demonstrations, and asked him to de-

pend upon the assurance of his sympathy and support.

The visit of Dr. H. was soon noised abroad. The course he had taken became generally known. The enemies of the prayer meetings were crestfallen. They were once more silenced without being satisfied. Though they were desperate, they were not less determined. But their power for evil was paralyzed. They were defeated and dismayed by the instrumentalities of their own choice. As in the case of Balak, though the messenger called was not a Balaam, yet to their confusion he had pronounced blessings instead of curses. Surely, the "wrath of man shall praise God."

It need not be said that the pastor and his band of praying members were greatly strengthened and encouraged. Perhaps in some hearts the evil spirit of partisan triumph may have been excited. Very likely it was. "To err is human" even in doing right. But however this may have been, God continued to favor their meetings and to crown them with success.

What wonderful transformations have been effected! In the religious exercises of the present day, what prominence is given to the prayer meeting! Its importance, how universally recognized! What dependence is made upon it as a means of promoting spirituality in the church and of bringing about the conversion of sinners! Standing upon this elevation and looking back upon developments, such as have been mentioned, and who is not ready to exclaim, *Why were these things so!* They cannot be justified; scarcely palliated, though they may be explained.

Several allusions have already been made to *Methodism;* and there will be occasion to refer to it here, as doubtless again hereafter. Between different churches, located side by side and operating in the same field, there must be mutual influence, and the condition of the one cannot be properly understood without giving some attention to the other. Under such circumstances it is not only allowable to notice common characteristics, but also the peculiarities of one as bearing upon the other. It may accordingly be befitting

here, once for all, to say, that no unkindness or disrespect has been or will be intended to this or any other sister denomination, which has been or may hereafter be mentioned.

Throughout that section of country, at that time, prayer meetings were well nigh unknown, only as they were held by Methodists. And as the friends of this denomination, whose memories reach back to that period, very well know, except as used among themselves, *Methodist*, then and there, meant *reproach*. Hence, to a very great extent, the prejudice against prayer meetings. The source whence they came was enough to condemn them. The idea of what a prayer meeting was, took its shape and shading from what was seen and heard about such meetings as conducted by Methodists. There were no others; therefore, a *prayer meeting* was a *Methodist prayer meeting*. And it should be remembered that such a meeting then was a very different thing from a Methodist meeting now. The writer calls to mind many scenes, personally witnessed, as between which and no prayer meetings, the choice

could not be difficult. It was therefore not alone the *origin*, but also the *character*, of these meetings, as many understood them, which made them the object of abhorrence.

Looking at the whole subject in the light of such facts, and taking into the account the liabilities of erring human nature to be influenced by them, who is not inclined to abate somewhat the severity of his judgment in regard to the class of persons whose conduct has been under consideration! Those dear friends were surely wrong, and very wrong, in arraying themselves against measures which the Scriptures clearly teach and which God has so abundantly blessed. Whatever improprieties obtained in the manner of conducting social meetings, they should have known that the best of things are capable of being abused. But this was a distinction for which they were not prepared. They became the victims of a mistake, very common even now, that the character of a measure is to be determined by its exemplification; than which no error can be more fatal. To judge of the merits of Christianity by the conduct of

the heartless hypocrite is as unphilosophical as it is unjust. Equally unphilosophical and unjust was it for those friends to condemn all prayer meetings because some were conducted in a disorderly manner.

Yet, let leave be taken of those who opposed them, in the exercise of the "charity which hopeth all things." Many of them were strongly, and no doubt, sincerely attached to the church. Most of them subsequently became the warm and confiding friends of the pastor, and learned to love and appreciate that class of meetings to which at this time they were so much opposed. And of all who shared in or sympathized with this opposition, perhaps scarcely one can be named, whether yet among the living or numbered with the dead, who did not, sooner or later, give to the *prayer meeting* an unqualified endorsement.

"Truth is mighty, and will prevail."

Thus it will be seen that the general drift within the bounds of this charge was beautifully in harmony with the pastor's plan. He had now

succeeded in making the evidences of a "change of heart" the only terms of admission into the church, and in establishing social meetings for prayer and conference as a means of cultivating and rendering effective for good to others, the gifts and graces of the membership, both male and female. Impulsive as was his nature, just now in all the glow of youthful ardor, it is not likely that he was satisfied with the pace at which matters were moving. But there is no evidence that he ever became impatient or discouraged.

Meanwhile a gracious work of a corresponding character was beginning to develop in other divisions of the great vineyard. As with individuals, so with churches; much depends upon their surroundings. In the moral as in the physical world, things tend to a common level. It is almost as difficult to keep up an elevated religious interest in one part of a community, while the coldness and rigidness of death pervades every other part, as it would be to maintain a temperature of blood heat in a single square yard of a room all the rest of which was at the freezing point.

In several contiguous localities the "spirit of prayer and supplication" was being poured out upon the people, and they were no "longer inclined to forget," as their "manner had been," the apostolic injunction, to "assemble themselves together."

The writer recalls with lively interest the first "*Lutheran prayer meeting*" in his native town. With many it was a question of no little curiosity who would be there to pray. The people gathered in crowds from one to four miles around. Christ was born in a *stable*, because there was no room for him at the inn. And the birth place of this Christ-like idea was a *barn*, because there was no sanctuary there. Those who went to that meeting to trifle, remained to be interested, and left with food for serious thought. Enough were there to pray. And no time was lost though the meeting was long. This, of the kind, was the first, but it was not the last. That same barn, for several successive summers, received the harvest of the farm during the week, and was cleansed and seated as a house of God for the Sabbath. One

meeting there cannot be forgotten. It commenced at 2 o'clock P. M. and lasted until the shadows deepened; or rather, disappeared. The brother who closed the exercises, alluding to the gathering clouds of mercy, exclaimed, "I hope to see the time when we can begin in the morning and continue all day." He saw it and more besides.

Similar meetings were now established in other communities and were carried on with similar encouragements. The old and the young, the saint and the sinner, in companies numbering a dozen or more, frequently went several miles on foot to some place "where prayer was wont to be made." As yet, there were not many conversions; but the shower was fast approaching. The first "sound of rain" was heard directly upon the border of Mr. Wieting's charge. There was a "four days meeting," held by a church of another denomination. Crowds of people came together. The whole country was moved. Many were deeply convicted; less were soundly converted. The meeting closed, and the work ceased. Much of the seed sown, fell by the wayside. Compara-

tively little found the good ground. The point of excitement is not always the centre of interest. Several surrounding churches were less agitated, but realized better results. One, especially, of Mr. Wieting's churches, was among that number.

CHAPTER IX.

REVIVALS.

During a period of about four years, commencing with 1830, there was a succession of "*Four Days Meetings*," held in different Lutheran churches in the Eastern part of the state of New York, the like of the results of which had never before been witnessed. The spirit of prayer, until then unknown, poured upon the children of God, causing large numbers of all classes of people to assemble and to continue together for hours, in barns, private dwellings and schoolhouses, engaged in social worship, as noticed in the preceding chapter, was obviously a preparation for this glorious visitation which so soon followed. How many of those meetings there were, where all of them were held, and the precise dates at which they occurred, cannot be determined. Much of what transpired during those years of mercy, is hopelessly lost. Few things

were made matters of record, and, except in dim outline, are fast fading from memory. It cannot even be ascertained where or in what manner these meetings had their origin. They doubtless were suggested by a felt necessity for something more than the ordinary means of grace; but why they should have continued just *four days*, and under no circumstances longer, it is difficult even to conjecture. Some things about them are worthy of imitation, even now, and should not be forgotten. There were no *Professional Revivalists*. All ministerial aid was gratuitously furnished by surrounding pastors. Personal and associate responsibilities were not ignored. It was believed that much depended upon fidelity and adaptation in the use of the means. Nevertheless, neither the pastor nor the Church was applauded for success or blamed for failure. The doctrine of the Apostle—"God giveth the increase"—was fully accepted. Every church holding such meeting, was expected to extend hospitality to visiting friends; and not unfrequently the houses of members and others were thronged much of the time.

In nearly all these meetings, Mr. Wieting was prominent. His services were always in demand and not unfrequently much disappointment was experienced when they could not be secured. His reputation as a preacher, and especially as an *exhorter* was largely acquired in those meetings. The power he sometimes wielded was almost fearful, as in several instances it seemed well nigh irresistible. The fact of his presence inspired confidence and was regarded as a sort of pledge that failure was impossible. When he ascended the pulpit, or rose in the altar, the people almost held their breath with interest, and it was expected that the hidden convictions and pent-up emotions of the impenitent would find appropriate expression. The more moderate and timid class of his ministerial brethren became oppressed by and fearful of his most powerful and controlling efforts. Nor is this surprising when it is remembered how strikingly in contrast they were, both in manner and in effect, with every thing of the sort to which they had been accustomed. A characteristic instance, often talked

of, and which was recently related to the writer, by a respected clergyman who for several years was pastor of the church where it occurred, may be given as a specimen of his movements upon such occasions.

The minister, who at that time was in charge of the church where this meeting was held, was a moderate man, not very deeply in sympathy with these "new measures," and withal, more or less apprehensive that they tended to fanaticism. But none the less on this account was he anxious about the spiritual welfare of his flock; and accordingly, he too commenced a meeting as a means of gathering in the fruits of his labor. Mr. Wieting was present, and the importance of his services was felt; but he was regarded with some distrust, and the hint was modestly given him that he must keep within the bounds of propriety. After speaking once or twice, subject to the restraint thus imposed, and feeling very much dissatisfied with the state of things and with the embarrassments of his position, he gave the pastor to understand that he should leave, and made

his arrangements accordingly. For this the good brother was not quite prepared, for he saw that he might as well at once close his meeting. He therefore offered some apology to Mr. Wieting, requested him to remain, placed the laboring oar in his hand and told him to take his own course, and not to feel trammelled. Mr. Wieting remained. At the next appointment the house was crowded, sitting and standing room and all. Though not certain, the impression is that he preached. But whether he did or not, he followed the sermon with an exhortation, pouring forth a perfect torrent of entreaty as he descended step by step from the pulpit to the altar. By this time his entire nature was fully roused and brought into action. Every feature of his face, every glance of his eye, every movement of his hands as they rose and fell, and of his body as it swayed to and fro, indicated and produced the most intense excitement. His voice was like the blast of a bugle, elevated, sonorous, of awful compass and thrilling intonation. The vast realm of motive, past, present, future, was open

to his view, and the terrors of Sinai, the touching accents of Calvary, the appalling scenes of the final judgment, were made to pass before the audience in rapid succession, and as realities which could not be questioned. From every source, thoughts darted like sunbeams; illustrations flashed like chain lightning; arguments fell like crashing thunderbolts. He left the altar, got out into the aisle, the crowd making room for him as he advanced, until he finally reached the middle of the church. The scene was awful, the influence overwhelming, the appeal resistless. Tears flowed in torrents. The cries of the audience became well nigh deafening. Ministerial brethren exchanged inquisitive glances of concernment, and one started towards him intending by some means to arrest the effort. But as he approached, perfectly unconscious of his presence, Mr. Wieting made a violent backward gesture, and the brother's face received the full force of the blow from his hand. The effect was neither felt by the speaker nor the audience; though the smitten brother returned to his seat. From

every part of the house the people rushed to the altar for prayers, and when the appeal ended there were *one hundred persons* on the anxious seat.

A meeting of the same description was held during the month of February, 1832. As usual, it commenced on Tuesday, and closed on Friday evening. On Thursday the attendance became so great, that it was resolved for the afternoon service to divide the audience, a part going to another church just across the way.

When the hour arrived the announcement was made; but for a time it seemed as though none were willing to leave. After a little, Mr. Wieting, with two other ministers, started to go out. As they forced their way through the crowded aisle, the interchanges of significant looks and whispers in different parts of the audience, gave no equivocal promise of a congregation at the other house. It was soon well filled. A slight dissatisfaction was shown when one of the other ministers ascended the pulpit. But that was of short duration. The preacher was in earnest,

and the fearful truth—God's displeasure with the wicked—went home to many hearts.

The sermon ended, and in his own peculiar way, Mr. Wieting rose in the altar. As to manner, what has been said respecting the former effort, is a sufficient description of this. It was one of his mightiest and most effective appeals. He did not leave the altar, but he walked to and fro in it, and it seemed as if the heavens were rent, and as if the elemental forces of mind and heart were breaking through every barrier and seeking new positions and relations. The most reckless, the most hardened, the most abandoned of men, were broken down and hastened to the anxious seat, as if escaping from the avenger of blood. It is confidently believed, that with only one or two exceptions, all in the house, who did not profess to be Christians, and not a few who did, made their way to the front seats for prayer.

One of those exceptions deserves special notice. This was a *lawyer*, a man of scholarly attainments and of distinction in his profession. Never very susceptible of religious influence, he

had at this time already passed the more impressible period of life. He evidently had not taken much interest in the sermon, cared very little whether any thing or nothing was effected, and was only anxious to hear Mr. Wieting. He was profoundly attentive, but he had not listened long before he found it necessary to use some *will-power* in self-defence. And seeing that even with such fortifications he was likely to be unequal to the undertaking, he resolved to retreat, and rushed for the door. As he went out into the street, he met an irreligious associate, and said to him, "What a time they are having here! Wieting is carrying every thing before him." After conversing for a moment, reinforced by his friend, the gentleman of the bar once more entered the church. But again he was made to feel that there was but a single alternative—to surrender or make his escape. He once more fled from that scene of awful interest, but he never forgot it. Again and again was he heard to speak of that meeting and of Mr. Wieting's appeal to the impenitent, always adding, "I never heard the like." And the

writer can bear similar testimony, for *he was present*. He occupied an humble place among the many who sought mercy at the Saviour's feet.

During the month of June of the same year—1832—meetings were held simultaneously in the two churches constituting Mr. Wieting's charge. Sufficient ministerial aid had been secured to carry on the effort in both places. It certainly was an expedient of questionable propriety, and why it was resorted to has never been explained. But whatever may be true respecting the precedent, the result was all that could have been expected. The attendance, notwithstanding the pressure of business in a farming community at that season of the year, was unusually large from the first. And, as has already been seen, it seemed as though there had been an excellent preparation for a thorough and an extensive work of grace. So all appeared to think; but for a time their expectations were doomed to disappointment. Perhaps already a measure of self-confidence had taken the place of simple faith in God. Perhaps, too, the class most susceptible of

religious influence had already been gathered into the fold, and others had made more or less progress in the fearful art of resistance. But whatever may have been the cause, the fact was that at first almost nothing was accomplished.

The rigid, hardened, unyielding state of the audience became more and more painfully apparent. Sermon after sermon was preached, accompanied by many prayers and entreaties, with little or no visible effect. Things were fast coming to a crisis. Something must soon be done or the effort must be abandoned as a failure. As might be expected, the pastor became intensely anxious. It was observed that during preaching he could not sit still. He not only turned this way and that, but frequently changed the position of his chair, thus keeping himself in constant motion, as if experiencing unendurable sufferings. At length he seized his hat and hurriedly left the house. One of the ministers present, who had been noticing him with some surprise, looked through the window and saw him going in the same rapid manner towards a piece of woods, a short distance

from the church; and fearing that he might be seriously unwell, went out in pursuit of him. After going a little way into the grove, he heard his voice in prayer. Bending his steps in the direction from whence the sound came, he soon saw him, rolling upon the ground, groaning, crying and praying in the most awful agony. He gazed upon him unobserved, until he became alarmed, and he then spoke to him, asking him to get up and go with him back to the church. For the instant the struggle was increased. Like Jacob, he seemed determined not to give up until the blessing was obtained. But at length he yielded to entreaty and rose, though he was so exhausted that he could scarcely walk. On reaching the church, with the exception of some manifestation of curiosity and surprise, and perhaps anxiety, in view of Mr. Wieting's appearance, on the part of the congregation things remained as they were when he left. After the sermon, the brother who had witnessed the pastor's agony, rose. He was intensely excited. He had probably known by his own experience something of

"the Spirit itself making intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Though ordinarily, neither brilliant nor impressive, especially in hortatory address, yet, when thorougly roused, as then, he was capable of very powerful effort. His voice, at such times, was sharp and shrill like the clangor of a trumpet, and he would seem like a well charged battery, sending forth an electric influence with startling effect. The impressions produced by the scene upon which he had just gazed, combined with the anxiety before realized, threw him into a condition of mind approximating the agony of the pastor. And he commenced his address by telling the audience *where* and in *what state* he had found Mr. Wieting. He called upon the church to hold up the hands of their pastor, and not to allow him to bear the burden alone. He appealed to the impenitent and demanded whether it was not enough that their sins had prostrated Christ in the garden and nailed him to the cross; whether, in addition, by their unyielding obstinacy, they meant to crush the servant of God who had thrown himself in the breach to effect their salvation.

In the language of the narrator, "the ice broke." The obstructed channel became clear and the current ran with overpowering impetuosity. At the conclusion of that service a goodly number of all classes were on the anxious seat.

But Mr. Wieting's burden was only partially removed. Satisfied with what he saw in prospect here, his yearnings were immediately turned to Sharon. Giving directions respecting appointments and other things, he started on foot for the other point of interest. The distance, as already stated, was about three miles. With the physical vigor he usually possessed, and the mental agitation he then experienced, it is easy to see that his pace was not likely to be very moderate. He was eager to reach the church before the close of the exercises, and he exerted himself accordingly. He was just in time. He had scarcely seated himself in the altar before the sermon ended. His appearance was almost alarming. His countenance was expressive of unendurable anxiety. His breathing was loud and rapid, and the sweat rolled from him like drops of rain. As the

preacher descended from the pulpit, sustaining himself under the exhaustion with well nigh superhuman effort, the pastor rose to his feet. He uttered a few words, became overwhelmed with emotion, and then articulation gave place to sobs and groans. The audience felt the shock and their responses were of a corresponding character. Soon, however, he sufficiently recovered his self-control to proceed; and after representing what had occurred in the other church just before he left, he made an appeal, of the matter and manner of which no description will be attempted. And now, here too, the "ice broke." Seat after seat was opened for and filled by those who desired prayers, until the congregation was thoroughly sifted and only here and there an unyielding sinner left.

The decisive point had now been gained. The great question was settled. That the glorious work would move on, there was no longer room for doubt. Mr. Wieting's mind became calm and his countenance beamed with satisfaction and joy. A precious ingathering was realized during these

meetings, but neither effort nor interest ceased when they closed. Lectures and meetings for prayer and inquiry were multiplied and sustained for a long time with scarcely any abatement of seriousness or success. Indeed, for several successive years a large measure of uninterrupted prosperity was experienced. The standard of spirituality was elevated. The zeal of the membership, for the most part, was ardent and unfaltering. Special manifestations of the Divine presence were not unfrequently realized at ordinary meetings. Conversions occurred from time to time, and at nearly every communion there were more or less additions to the churches.

Mr. Wieting was at home very little. The field was large, the members scattered, his appointments numerous and his pastoral duties pressing. The parsonage was lonely; no neighbors were near; the young wife was timid; accordingly, he seldom remained away over night. As a consequence, his travels were extensive. He often started early in the morning and did not return until late in the evening. He rode on horseback

and it sometimes happened that neither horse nor rider found any refreshment during the day.

This faithful and favorite animal, after a while, became a sort of congregational pet, and seemed to understand almost as well as the owner the round of weekly engagements. She was a small, bright bay mare; and Mr. Wieting related to the writer several facts respecting her in view of which he became strongly attached to her. A single incident, indicating a wonderful phase of animal instinct, as also the devotional habits of the owner, may here be mentioned.

Before leaving home in the morning, Mr. Wieting was wont to adjust everything about the barn and to supply the rack and manger with hay and grain. He did this so that upon returning in the evening, when he was usually very weary, he would have nothing to do but to remove saddle and bridle and tie his horse in the stall. Mrs. Wieting frequently retired before her husband's return; and that he might disturb her as little as possible, he got in the habit of offering his evening prayers in the stable. He was accustomed to

to kneel a short distance from where his horse was standing; and after a while his attention was called to the fact that she *never indulged in eating while he was praying.* With her hay and oats before her and her appetite sharpened by perhaps the fast of a whole day, she would drop her head and remain perfectly quiet until her master rose from his knees; when she would at once step up to the manger and begin to eat.

He used to say that if man could be under obligations to an animal, he was deeply indebted to this faithful horse for safety, speed and comfort in the prosecution of his laborious duties for several years.

The attention which Mr. Wieting everywhere attracted and the reputation he acquired as an effective worker in revivals, greatly added to his ministerial responsibilities. Wherever meetings were held, he was not only invited but pressed into service. His time and energies were almost constantly overtaxed, and little opportunity was left him for either rest or study. But greatly to his credit, as a pastor, let it be said, he never

sacrificed his home duties to meet the wishes or the wants of either ministers or churches abroad. However pressing the call, if any of his members were sick, if there were funerals to be attended or any other pastoral work to be done, he never could be persuaded to leave. And if the tidings of any such occurrences reached him while away, he was always sure to return immediately. His decisions in such cases were not unfrequently sources of trial to those with whom he was associated.

Wherever he labored he gathered food for his own people. And he did this, not so much, as many do, by the accumulation of material as of spiritual influence. For getting or using incidents he had but little tact. But the fires kindled at other altars glowed with greatest intensity upon his own. If he was strengthened and stimulated abroad he became more active and earnest at home.

In one of the meetings he attended, the power of God was signally displayed, especially among the members of the church. They became sin-

gularly elevated in their devotional feelings and very zealous in their endeavors to lead sinners to Christ. In getting back to his own charge, he felt the contrast. He was afflicted and depressed by it. His own dear people were comparatively cold and inactive, and there seemed to be but little to satisfy or encourage him. The Sabbath was near at hand. He was not prepared for the duties of the day. He was in no condition to study. He could not even find a text. He toiled hard until late Saturday evening, but accomplished nothing. The morning dawned but brought no relief. The congregation began to assemble. His mind became deeply agitated; yet up to the hour at which the service was to commence he was without a solitary thought upon which he could concentrate his attention. Those only who have passed through similar experiences, can form any idea of the feelings with which he went to his appointment. But who will say that God does not grant his servants special aid in such emergencies! Mr. Wieting often said, "When I have done all I could in getting ready

to preach, however fruitless my endeavors, God has never disappointed me." And this trying instance was not an exception. In turning over the leaves of the Bible to find a lesson to read, he came to the fortieth chapter of Isaiah, and his eye rested upon the expression, "The voice said cry; and he said what shall I cry?" Instantaneously light broke in upon his understanding and his heart melted. "God," thought he, "has given me a text; may he help me to preach the sermon." And he did help him. It was one of his mightiest, most successful efforts. Though the day was unfavorable and the congregation small, from fifteen to twenty traced their convictions and some their conversions to that sermon.

The practicability of combining the "*Revivalist*" with the pastor, is fully demonstrated in Mr. Wieting's experience. During the forty years of his pastoral life he had twenty-five revivals in his own charge, and doubtless he was more or less instrumental in promoting and sustaining three times that number elsewhere.

"By their fruits ye shall know them."

CHAPTER X.

SYNODICAL TROUBLES.

The "seed corn" of Christianity planted in American soil was the product of the great Reformation. The Lutheran Denomination was among the first represented in this country. And for self-propagation its facilities have been unequalled. It now "occupies the fourth rank among the Protestant churches of the United States in point of numbers." *Why has its progress been so slow?* Comprehensively, but one answer can be given. "Two nations were in her womb." And the pre-natal "struggle" has been continued down to the present date. German and American peculiarities will not coalesce. The contest respecting "historical identity" and denominational standards, has been a source of diversified, universal and ceaseless embarrassment. And almost invariably the issues have been, not whether this or that fundamental doctrine was true or false,

but whether either or both were taught in one or more of the documents called the "*Symbolical Books.*" *Ecclesiastical authority* has really been the question in dispute; and though, as controlled by conviction, sympathy or interest, Germans have sided with Americans and Americans with Germans; yet, representatively, these nationalities have been the parties in the contest.

As early as 1832—perhaps before—in some sections of the state of New York, the "Augsburg Confession" became the occasion of dissatisfaction. The point of agitation was not whether there was unity of faith among the ministers and churches, but whether that Confession must be adopted as the standard of faith. It was claimed that several of its articles either misrepresented the sentiments generally believed and preached, or that their meaning was misapprehended. And to escape the supposed inconsistency and the prejudice which it was sure to excite, several of the churches published a doctrinal *Expose*, each for itself. Mr. Wieting's charge was *not* among this number. It was thus that the *Confessional question* found its way into the Hartwick Synod.

About the same time the subject of *Temperance* began to be publicly discussed. The use of intoxicating drinks was well nigh universal, and inebriety in every degree, was prevalent in the community and far from being unknown in the churches. Temperance societies and pledges were strenuously opposed. And if a house of worship was opened for a temperance meeting, or if a minister preached a temperance sermon, dissensions and difficulties were almost sure to follow. But the most troublesome question was whether dissipated members should be disciplined. Precedent, prejudice, peace, interest were against it. Fidelity, purity, the reputation of the church, the honor of religion, it was held by some, demanded it. Persons of different temperaments and different circumstances arrived at different conclusions. Some said it involved principle and must be firmly met; others insisted that sound policy suggested careful discrimination and wise forbearance. With rare exceptions, ministers were the warm and decided friends of temperance; but they differed, and sometimes seriously, about the positions

which churches and ecclesiastical bodies should take in regard to intemperance. As a matter of course, synodical agitations were inevitable.

A more serious state of things existed respecting the subject of *Slavery*. It necessarily involved questions of morality and religion which none could overlook and few could treat with indifference. Nor, with all its complications and oppositely modifying circumstances, could unity of sentiment be expected, either in the community or in the church. Not even upon the abstract question whether man might rightly be held as a "chattel personal" by his fellow-man, were all prepared to take the negative ground. The subject was of a very exciting character; its friends and its foes were alike positive and determined, and much that was exceptionable was said and done on both sides; every division of the church was disturbed and the whole country convulsed by it. One of the most exciting religious issues was, whether individually or associationally it was possible to remain silent without sin. And the idea of constructive guilt or innocence was carried to a fearful extent.

Such being the condition of affairs, it was not possible for a religious organization to escape agitation. Accordingly, at the annual session of the Hartwick Synod in 1836, the subject was presented and the action of the body was invoked. A short but earnest discussion ensued, during which the parties evinced much feeling. A motion declaring action inexpedient was lost. A motion to indefinitely postpone, was carried. As in all such cases, suppression only increased irritation. The minority became more deeply dissatisfied, the Synod, as such, now standing committed.

Respecting the standard of ministerial qualifications, there were also differences of opinion. All pretended to be, and doubtless were, the earnest friends of a *thoroughly* educated ministry.

All agreed that no pains or sacrifices should be spared to raise up such a ministry. But the wants of the church were pressing and such a supply was not possible. There was a single alternative. The class of men whose services could

be secured, must be sent to the waste places of Zion, or many of her feeble churches must be left to languish and die. Should an exception be made to meet an emergency? It was an exceedingly delicate, as it always has been a difficult question. Men of very little culture, were already members of the body and were fully awake to everything said against the class to which they belonged; while others, anxious to be admitted, as well as their friends, felt that the opposition was more or less personal. And while on the one hand there was a disposition to maintain, with unflinching firmness, an elevated educational standard, on the other, recognizing the same standard as the rule, and insisting that *more* attention should be given to spirituality, it was claimed respecting literary attainments, that necessity suggested discrimination. And as the same members sided with each other upon all of these important issues, the line became effectually drawn. The factions knew their men and their relative strength. Tendencies were unmistakable.

In all these ecclesiastical controversies, Mr.

Wieting's positions and associations remained unequivocal and unchanged. He was a radical, but not an extremist. Upon the Confession, he was less troubled, less strenuous than others. In common with them he felt the difficulties, but found relief in more liberal constructions. In regard to Temperance and Anti-slavery, he was not less decided in principle, but more conservative in practice. He was deeply in sympathy with feeble churches in a state of destitution, and was very desirous to multiply ministers, that their wants might be supplied. Hence, perhaps he felt more sanguine here than upon any other point under discussion.

During the month of May, 1837, the *Franckean Evangelic Lutheran Synod* was organized. Mr. Wieting was chairman of the conference by which the convention was called, and his name was appended to the circular, inviting ministers to attend and churches to be represented by delegates. He opened the convention with prayer, stated the object for which it had been called, and was chairman of the committee by which the Synodical

Constitution was reported. He was the first secretary of the Synod, proposed the first applicants for licensure, and preached the first synodical sermon. It will thus be seen that he was prominent in effecting the organization and in giving shape and direction to its first proceedings.

The record as thus given might suggest that he was fast and forward in crowding the expedient to a consummation. This, however, was not so. Constitutionally, and habitually, Mr. Wieting was too timid to be precipitate. He was fully satisfied that decisive measures were called for, and that necessity pointed to organization. Yet he is to be credited for whatever of caution characterized the movement, rather than censured for any thing having the appearance of rashness.

Seldom has it occurred that a religious enterprise so diminutive and obscure in its origin, so unquestionable in its character and design, has been the occasion of agitations and evils so deep, so diversified, so far reaching and so continued. Of course, no attempt will here be made to justify the conception or the manner of its development.

Nevertheless, fairness and fidelity demand the statement, that while many damaging rumors were circulated and many cruel prejudices were excited for which there was not the least foundation, there doubtless were some suspicions and fears legitimately suggested by the looseness of sentiment and indiscretion of procedure with which one of the principal actors was justly chargeable. This was JOHN D. LAWYER. Notwithstanding, every ingenuous person, at all familiar with the facts, will incline to the opinion that his connections with the movement, were a misfortune rather than a fault. He left the bar for the pulpit; was licensed and ordained by the New York Ministerium; was pastor of one of the largest churches in the State, and resigned the presidency of the Hartwick Synod to become a member of the new Synod. Mr. Lawyer was known to have his peculiarities; but up to this time, both as regarded his soundness in the faith and his reliability as a minister of the gospel, he was entirely above suspicion. Indeed, he had been so prominently connected with and so zealously devoted to every

good work, that he readily found a warm place in Mr. Wieting's heart, and became very closely and influentially associated with him. Subsequent developments, however, proved how little he was to be trusted. The exciting and distracting state of things then existing, was exactly calculated to bring to "light the hidden" weaknesses and deficiencies of Mr. Lawyer's character. He ultimately ran into almost every variety of theological error, and his habits of life soon became as irregular as was the action of his mind. Most unjustly, for his vagaries and inconsistencies, the Synod as a whole, and Mr. Wieting in particular, were held responsible. The truth is, none of his strange notions found the least favor from any of the members of the body. Mr. Lawyer's views and conduct were a source of severe trial to all, and to none more than to Mr. Wieting. And when the point was reached at which "forbearance ceases to be a virtue," and it became the writer's duty to call him to an account, Mr. Wieting not only insisted upon the necessity but firmly sustained the disciplinary measures. To raise his

hand against a brother with whom he had been so intimate, under circumstances so trying, was indeed a severe test of fidelity; but nobly, though sorrowfully, did he meet it.

A ship, weakened, and left scarcely seaworthy by heavy gales, overtaken in mid-ocean by desolating storms, with part of the crew in mutiny, is *not* an exaggerated representation of the state of this field for a succession of years. The Synodical contest was by far the most afflictive experience of his ministerial life. There were painful alienations of much-loved friends, and fearful distractions of a once peaceful and prosperous charge. There was a multiplication of crushing and "soul consuming cares," an increase of intense and continued anxiety, respecting ever varying and uncertain issues, involving principles and interests of the highest moment. What wakeful and unflagging vigilance was necessary to save the church from spiritual wreck; to hold back the members from every form of scandalizing improprieties; the hasty from rashness, the self-willed from violence, the credulous from deception, the timid

from despair! Terrible was the effect of the exciting threats, the harrassing endurance, the vexatious consequences of unavoidable litigation. Keen was the sense of injustice felt in the loss of property, rendered valuable by hard labor with his own hands, and of the use of sanctuaries, across whose doors the spider's web might have remained unbroken, and upon whose altars the swallow might have laid her young without disturbance, but for his untiring efforts. What imagination shall picture or what pen describe the endless perplexities, the frightful difficulties encountered in paying costs, in building new houses of worship, sustaining losses by fire, and in surmounting other discouragements, which have never been classified and for which language has furnished no name! Had Mr. Wieting been a *hireling* he would have fled at the approach of such danger. Had he been a coward, he would have sought relief by desertion or surrender. He did neither. He was calmest when the struggle was most terrific; strongest in disaster, and most decided when everything around him was most uncertain. Who

can mention an instance of censurable rashness, even under the pressure of excitement, or of disloyalty to his convictions, to escape undesirable consequences? Who will truthfully charge him with having sought, by falsehood or fraud, by sly inuendo or subtle misrepresentation, to disable or dishonor those with whom he was at variance? Who will say that he ever availed himself of advantages thrown in his way to deprive them of their rights or to embarrass them in any justifiable self defence? "To err is human." And to imply that he was faultless during all these years of trial, would be the extreme of presumption. His mistakes are well remembered, and by none deplored more than by himself. But without fear of successful contradiction, it may and should be said, that in the midst of all the confusion and excitement of this perilous period, with all the conflict of motive and torrent of temptation Mr. Wieting never treacherously deserted a friend; never unfairly treated an enemy; never took questionable ground because it was likely to strengthen his cause; never abandoned a position to escape popular odium.

And now that the clash of arms has ceased and the smoke of the contest has passed away; now that the veteran chieftain has been borne, not from among the fallen and the vanquished, but from the bosom of a once more peaceful charge, from the quiet home of retired life to the silent resting place of the honored dead, let his wisdom, his worth, his tireless devotion, his unswerving fidelity, be recognized without exaggeration or envy.

No mention will here be made of the more specific points or detailed progress of this most unfortunate controversy. And for the measure of success with which Mr. Wieting's ministry was crowned, even during these dark days, the reader will be referred to his own statements, as contained in his "*Fortieth Anniversary Sermon*," hereafter to be presented.

It is doubtless a source of satisfaction to all, that he was not only permitted to see but enjoy, not only the cessation of strife, but the restoration also of a good degree of Christian confidence, and of ecclesiastical reciprocity. He lived to bear the fraternal greetings of his Synod, for whose sake

he had suffered so much, to the body from which this Synod separated, and between which and this the contest had been so severe and so protracted. He lived to represent the organization of his choice on the floor of the General Synod, which by its own action had assumed the position of a party in the dispute. He lived to be permitted to explain the ground taken by him and others at first, and to know that, if not to all, at least to most, the explanation was satisfactory. He lived until, with his Synod, he was allowed to enjoy theological endorsement and ecclesiastical fellowship.

Perhaps this chapter, touching topics of such delicate interest, cannot be more appropriately closed than by a statement of the principles in accordance with which it has been written. It has been the object of dread since the task of preparing this memorial was accepted. It has cost more perplexing thought than the whole of the work besides. So important a part of Mr. Wieting's life, a part in which are unfolded so impressively the most striking features of his character, could not

be passed over in silence. Nor could his memory be made to suffer by leaving important facts untold for fear of giving offence. Such a course would be cowardly if not contemptible. And yet, why should a controversy, so well nigh ended by exhaustion, be renewed? Why should wounds, almost healed, be torn open afresh! Why should fires so nearly extinguished, be rekindled? So far as the writer is concerned, such must have been the result, had he discussed past issues on their general merits. Instead, therefore, of adopting either course, the venturesome attempt has been made to sail between Scylla and Charybdis. The studious aim has been to closely follow the line of Mr. Wieting's life and labors, giving them only sufficient amplification to bring out properly and distinctly his personality, implicating other parties as little as possible. The responsibility of general historical representations has been carefully avoided, also the expression of personal opinions upon questionable topics. In thus standing "between the living and the dead," how far the endeavor to deal fairly and kindly with both

has been successful, every reader, of course, must judge for himself. And if in the exercise of that judgment the most fastidious will be as magnanimous as it is believed the departed Brother was, and as it has been the aim of the writer to be, though exceptions to conclusions may be taken, none other than feelings of kindness towards all will be cherished.

CHAPTER XI.

FINANCE AND FAMILY.

Troubles in Mr. Wieting's charge commenced soon after the formation of the "New Synod." The "old leaven" had never been fully "purged" out. A remnant of the old order of things remained. A small cabal had cherished an unyielding hostility to his "new measures" from the first, and the coveted occasion for manifesting it had now arived. An effort was made to prevent the churches from establishing a proper relation to that body. This, however, proved an entire failure, as a large majority favored such relation. It was then determined to control the property and secure for the party favoring the Hartwick Synod, an exclusive ownership. The right of this party to a share never was questioned; but as Mr. Wieting and his friends were in actual possession, a suit was instituted against them. The litigation was continued for several

years. After a time the propety as a whole, consisting of two churches, a parsonage and the glebe, passed into the hands of the prosecutors. The loss of the land was most sorely felt, as by Mr. Wieting's own toil and care it had been transformed from a forest to a productive farm. But the act of which he most frequently complained as flagrantly unjust, was the enforcement of an old claim after all was given up. Nevertheless, it was paid, as also the costs of the suit. Measures were taken to provide for other places to worship, until churches could be erected. In June, 1849, the one at Gardnersville was dedicated. By the carelessness of one of the workmen, in kiln-drying, a valuable lot of lumber had been consumed. Other causes of delay and discouragement had also been encountered, but firmly and cheerfully surmounted. A noble structure was completed, which subsequently was burned, and this was supposed to have been the work of an incendiary. The church at Lawyersville was dedicated in February, 1850. During all these trials and enormous taxations, this charge was blessed with

revivals; the churches received accessions, and with equal liberality raised their regular contributions for benevolent purposes.

Mr. Wieting's *financial* affairs have occasioned some surprise and even suspicion. From his parents he received no pecuniary assistance. The salary upon which he settled as a pastor, was $300, parsonage and use of glebe. And during no part of his ministry was his salary more than $500. Nor was he, as many ministers are, the recipient of yearly *donations*. The gratuities of forty years, all told, did not, probably, exceed $300. Nevertheless, he became comparatively affluent and left an estate which equalled, if it did not exceed the average wealth of even the most thrifty part of his parishioners. All these facts have been well known, and the curious have been eager to learn how from such resources such results could be realized. Persons given to "evil surmisings" have indulged in ungenerous and discreditable conjectures. These things have so annoyed some of the most substantial members, that they placed the writer under pledge that their "Beloved Pas-

tor" should be vindicated. And here, at least, they have furnished materials in abundance.

In entering upon this pleasing task, it will be befitting first to properly rebuke the meddlesome scrutiny by which it is rendered necessary. Those whose suspicions are most sensitive are themselves always most liable to suspicion. Stolen property is quite likely to be found in the hands of him who cries "Thief." Such persons should be reminded that respectable people generally, and ministers in particular, may not be as easily tempted to do evil, as they are themselves. Nor should they forget that the public have no more to do with a minister's private affairs than with their own. But this right will not be insisted upon in Mr. Wieting's behalf. His business habits will bear examination. Facts which afford the best vindication, unfold some of his rarest virtues. Many may read to admire and study to imitate.

Mrs. Wieting's father possessed considerable wealth. He dealt liberally with his children, and Mrs. W.'s portion, first and last, was, for that

time, a respectable legacy. And, as a sensible man and a good financier, anticipating the possibility of her future dependence, Mr. Wieting invested the entire amount, and, with the legitimate annual percentage, held it in sacred trust against the liabilities of a poor minister's family. A very little knowledge of arithmetic will enable any one to understand how a moderate sum in this way within the period of forty years, most legitimately becomes a handsome fortune.

As a rule, the products of the farm and the perquisites of the profession, were made to support the family; while the small salary received was placed on deposit. To do this, of course, the most untiring industry and the most rigid economy were indispensable. And to the credit of Mr. and Mrs. Wieting be it said, that these stern virtues were not only exemplified in their own lives, but also reproduced in their children. Let no one, however, suppose that economy was carried to meanness. The truth is, the tax upon the family income by visiting friends from the congregation and from abroad, was tremendous. The writer

has himself shared the hospitality of the parsonage in common with *twenty* others during the same night. And it was a common remark that the pastor's house was a congregational *hotel.*

Mr. Wieting's family was not large; two sons and one daughter. And they never ate the bread of idleness nor squandered the hard earnings of their parents in extravagance or dissipation. And after they were grown up, by ceaseless application and careful management they largely increased the family revenue. Their toils were richly rewarded by the avails of the dairy and the farm. Of course, "Father" was at the helm; but he understood business, and was capable of directing the industry of his sons without encroaching upon the time which was due to his people. Said an intimate friend and a competent judge to the writer recently, "Mr. Wieting never allowed business to interfere with duty."

Though he never engaged in speculations, yet several judicious purchases and sales, very considerably increased the aggregate of his property. He probably never purchased real estate with any

view of selling again for gain; yet, selling from other considerations, he never failed to realize an advance. Either fortune favored him in this respect, or he had the sagacity to foresee the safety of temporary investment.

Nor should Mr. Wieting's material prosperity suggest that he was wanting in liberality. Few understood better or believed in more firmly the sentiment that "withholding more than is meet tendeth to poverty." His faith in benevolence as an element of business success was a practical reality. Controlled by principle, and not by impulse, he sometimes refused to give when others gave, and gave when others refused. Recognizing himself and family as members of the congregation, he always contributed liberally towards his own salary, church repairs, and incidental expenses. He always shared in making up arrearages and in meeting special claims. And in paying the costs of litigation, and erecting new churches, to use the language of one who stood close by his side during that searching ordeal, "no name was higher than his." In regard to general benevo-

lence, he evidently secured for his people the enviable notoriety which for many years they enjoyed, by the force of his own example. His contributions usually served as samples and stimulants to the church as a whole, and he seldom failed in raising a desired amount.

There was, however, one feature of Mr. Wieting's financial management which cannot be commended. In regard to the pastor's salary, he utterly failed to bring his charge up to the true standard. They never gave him a living support. The contrast in their generosity here and elsewhere was very remarkable. It can be explained, but never justified. As a defect in their religious training it may long remain a source of embarrassment. The fact was that neither he nor his people felt the pressure of obligation respecting his salary as a means of his support. Mutually they made dependence upon other resources. During the latter part of his ministry, when his attention was naturally directed to the influence this state of things was likely to have upon successors, he often spoke of it as a mistake which he could

never correct. Nevertheless, the exalted sense of right and honor which that worthy people have again and again evinced under the most trying circumstances, should be ample security that they will promptly and properly accommodate themselves to the changes which have occurred in their situation.

Perhaps nothing in the history of Mr. Wieting's personal ministry is more worthy of notice than the facts relating to his *health*. Few have enjoyed for a longer period a greater measure of this invaluable blessing. For *twenty-five* years he scarcely knew what sickness was. And surely this was not owing to any care he took of himself. In effort and in exposure he was perfectly prodigal, not perhaps so much the result of thoughtlessness as of necessity. It was not possible for him to meet his numerous engagements, scattered over a territory so extensive, without taxing his energies to the utmost and enduring all sorts of liabilities. And his *manner* of preaching increased the tax and liabilities tenfold. He frequently expended more nervous and muscular vigor in a

single sermon than some moderate men do in delivering a dozen. The very idea of keeping up the practice of preaching, *as he preached*, in close, crowded school-houses, and then riding in the cold, damp air from one to six miles, through depths of mud and drifts of snow, is appalling to a man of delicate constitution. For a time he seemed to act upon the presumption, that though his system might be exhausted it could not be injured. But, alas! there is a limit to man's powers of endurance. And the tears of repentance will not atone for violations of physical law. With Mr. Wieting, as with others, the day of reckoning came. His first serious sickness occurred in 1855. The shock to such a constitution when assailed by disease sufficiently to prostrate it, is always terrible. It was so in his case. And though he revived, he never recovered. The foundations were shattered, and when, in 1860, the foe made the second assault, the defence was feeble. During the last ten years, though he performed much valuable service, and sometimes seemed to "renew his youth like the eagle," yet life, for the most part,

was *labor*. He frequently reminded the writer of a piece of complicated mechanism, whose movements were irregular and unreliable, because, though the parts still possessed great strength, they had become incapable of adjustment.

For quite a length of time, Mr. Wieting made much use of *tobacco*. In fact, he became an inveterate smoker. Subsequently the habit was indulged periodically. He would throw aside his pipe in the summer and resort to it again in the winter. Many of his best friends, thought then, and think still, that this powerful narcotic injured him. And, though he usually disarmed entreaty by merriment, yet there were times when he gave sober utterance to his convictions respecting this alarmingly prevalent practice. He unhesitatingly acknowledged that the effect was detrimental, but always insisted that habit had superinduced a state of the system which rendered the influence indispensable; an opinion in which he was evidently sincere, though as evidently mistaken. And if others, especially his younger brethren in the ministry, followed his example, they did it

against his advice. He was decidedly opposed to rendering pecuniary aid to young men in their studies for the ministry, who indulged in the use of tobacco; and always displeased when application was made for licensure or ordination by a smoking or chewing candidate. In such cases, should not precept prevail against example?

Home is at the same time the source and test of character. Domestic discipline is indispensable for every sphere. If a man is not congenial and happy in the family, his usefulness in all of life's relations must be limited indeed.

Mr. Wieting was not only pre-eminently social, but domestic. Very strong were his attachments to that combination of objects and interests which constituted his *home*. He enjoyed it while there, and he carried it with him when he went abroad. The conjugal tie seemed more sacred and endearing as in the decline of health he more fully comprehended its significance as a source of consolation and support. In speaking to or of his esteemed companion, he almost always blended the tenderness of the husband with the deference of the

child, using the endearing appellation of "*Mother!*" And more than once was he heard to say that he never had appreciated her excellence as since he had been dependent upon her kindness. He was passionately fond of children, and as playful with them as they were with each other. And while he treated his own children with wonderful familiarity, yet he seldom lost sight of parental responsibility. He was capable of sternness, of petulance, of even fault-finding in his family; but sunshine was the rule, shadow the exception. The annoyances caused by his own family were sometimes made the occasion of rebuking the improprieties of others. The following is an instance.

His people were accustomed to bring their infant children to church, a practice which has been well nigh universally abandoned. He was frequently perplexed while preaching, by the crying of several at the same time. Of course, he could not submit to such disturbance, but the feelings of a mother, sufficiently interested in public worship to subject herself while there, to the care of a troublesome child, he would not offend.

He finally hit upon an expedient which relieved him of the presence of the children without incurring the displeasure of the mothers. There was just then a crying infant at the *Parsonage*. From the certainty of what would follow, it had never been taken to church. A little consultation took place between the pastor and his wife, as the result of which the child was carried to the house of God on the succeeding Sabbath. It is neither necessary to say that the child cried nor that the pastor was disturbed by it. The usual maternal efforts failed to quiet the little "scape goat," and after appropriate looks of displeasure, by language sufficiently comprehensive and emphatic to produce the desired effect, Mrs. Wieting was made to understand that it was better that children should be left at home than that a whole congregation should be annoyed by them. The reader can easily guess what followed.

Soon after the question respecting the church property was settled, a final leave was taken of the old, lonesome parsonage at New Rhinebeck. Though never congenial, it had been a home of

happiness during an interesting and eventful period of life. Many delightful associations clustered around it, many deeply shaded memories, the most sorrowful of which was, the injustice, as they thought, of having it wrested from them. But even this was believed to be among the "all things" which "work together for good to those who love God." A new home was fitted up a few miles distant in a more pleasant place, quite thickly populated. To this no one could question their right. It was bought and paid for, and held as private property. No ecclesiastical dissensions, no anxieties about the "glorious uncertainties of law," disturbed them as to the family residence. It was situated on an excellent farm; and it was here that by successful husbandry, conducted by the two sons, now men, a very considerable share of the patrimonial estate was accumulated.

It is one of the melancholy features of human affairs, that the very laws of development tend to dissolution. And no where is this more sensibly realized than in the domestic relations. There may be a *household*, but there can be no *family*

where there are no *children*. The household becomes a family when children are brought into it, and it ceases to be a family when they go out of it. And though the close is as legitimate as the commencement, the effect is very different. Where children once have been, life becomes a sediment when they leave. That dwelling around whose yards and through whose apartments have been heard the rapid footsteps and merry voices of little ones for many years, now the father and mother the only occupants, what a solitude! Those parents, once how busy and how full of hope! There were those around them to feed and clothe and govern and educate, to pray for, and to lead to Christ for whose sake they lost sight of and forgot themselves. That day is past, that work is completed. How lonely! They *stay* at home, but they *live* elsewhere.

And such was the condition in which their many friends were soon to find Mr. and Mrs. Wieting. The homestead was sold. The sons were married and settled on farms a few miles from the place of their birth. The daughter, too,

was married; but as it more frequently happens with daughters than with sons, her home was more distant. Thus, all their children were happily married, pleasantly settled and doing well. Age was creeping over the parents. Mr. Wieting's health was fast failing, and he felt that he was no longer able to meet the responsibilities of the beloved charge over which he had watched for so many years. He must resign. Notice was accordingly given that his *Fortieth Anniversary Sermon*, would be his *Valedictory!* A beautiful residence had been secured in the beautiful village of Cobleskill—the place of retirement—and the venerable pastor and his much esteemed wife were comfortably quartered in it. The first of October came, and the memorable sermon was preached, first at Gardnersville and on the succeeding Sabbath at Lawyersville. That sermon is herewith presented, and it is the only one of the many he preached which will ever be printed. The reader will find it as it was penned by his trembling hand; only a very few verbal changes having been made in it. Those who heard it, and who knew the venerable author best, will prize it highest.

CHAPTER XII.

ANNIVERSARY AND VALEDICTORY.

THE LAST APPEAL.

The Fortieth Anniversary and Valedictory Sermon preached at Gardnersville, Oct. 1st, 1869, and repeated at Lawyersville, on the succeeding Sabbath.

"WHO HATH BELIEVED OUR REPORT?"—Isa. liii. 1.

IT has pleased Almighty God in His all-wise, kind and adorable Providence, that I should meet you this morning under circumstances of a peculiar and interesting character. Forty years have elapsed since I began to break unto you the bread of life. At the very commencement of my ministerial career amongst you, I announced my determination "to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." How far this determination has been fulfilled I am willing to submit to the decision of your judgments and

the fruits of my ministry. "Ye are my witnesses" "that I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God." And those who have become the seals of my ministry, can bear witness that such declaration has not been in vain. In looking back upon so many years of labor, I can distinctly discern the most evident tokens of the presence, the favor and approbation of a faithful and covenant-keeping God. And such a review cannot but call forth the most grateful emotions of praise.

Having been allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, I have labored assiduously to fulfil that trust by proclaiming to you the "unsearchable riches of Christ." It has been my constant aim to cherish a deep and an abiding sense of the awful responsibilities connected with the station I have occupied; for it is one involving all that is interesting in time and all that is solemn and momentous in eternity. If a realizing view of these interests constrained even an inspired apostle to exclaim, "Who is sufficient for these things," surely such an exclamation

should more appropriately come from the humbler servants of the mysteries of Christ. But we are consoled in the thought, that our sufficiency for this great work is from Him; yea, that his grace shall be sufficient for us and his strength shall be made perfect in our weakness: and we know that his promise shall not fail—"Lo I am with you always even to the end of the world."

Encouraged by such exceeding great and precious promises, the Apostle girded himself for the conflict. He feared not the frowns, he courted not the smiles of men. The "love of Christ constrained him." He preached Jesus Christ and him crucified faithfully, boldly, perseveringly, successfully. This was the great theme of all his instructions. Wherever he stood up in the defence of the gospel, whether in the solemn assembly, in the domestic circle, or before kings and rulers, his instructions were ever the same. Neither the love of fame or the fear of imprisonment or death, could arrest his zeal, damp his ardor, or silence his testimony. He spoke with equal firmness, boldness and simplicity before the

high and low, rich and poor. He cared not whether his hearers approved or disapproved of his doctrine, if it was only in accordance with the mind of Christ.

The prophetic office under the Old Testament dispensation, as well as the ministry of the gospel under the New, is an institution of grace, adapted and designed for the recovery of lost sinners and for the edification and consolation of the Lord's people. This is the grand purpose which subserves the manifestation of the divine glory. The vast importance of this office, as well as the undoubted authority with which it is invested, rests upon the truth and authenticity of that system of revelation which is contained in the Holy Scriptures. If "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God," and if "holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," then there is an obligation accompanying the dispensation of the truth, which can neither be annulled nor evaded. It is God himself, speaking to the children of men, by his accredited agents, and the message they deliver in his name, com-

mands at once the attention and binds the conscience of all to whom it comes. Nor can it be rejected or despised without incurring guilt of the most aggravating nature, and consequently involving exposure to the righteous displeasure of Heaven. Under this solemn impression the prophets delivered their messages, and in order to secure the attention of those to whom they were sent, they not unfrequently pressed the messages with the emphatic declaration of "Thus saith the Lord." The Apostles of our Lord claimed the same authority, and demanded the same obedience to the proclamations of the gospel. "Now then," said Paul, "we are embassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

The ministering servants of Christ in all ages, sustain the same character, are entitled to the same respect and equally reveal the will of God, in connection with the dearest interests of mankind. Like the prophets and apostles, they also unveil the appropriate allotments of eternity and unfold to the eye of faith visions of the highest

glory and scenes of the blackest despair. If they feel the sacredness, the solemnity and responsibility of their office, as well as its momentous and interesting issues, they will be instant in season and out of season, in admonishing, reproving and exhorting, "not counting their own lives dear, so that they may finish their course with joy and the ministry which they have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." This was a striking and prominent feature in the ministry of the prophet Isaiah. The boldness, fidelity and persevering diligence with which he proclaimed the messages of God, in the face of danger and death, show at once how deeply he felt the responsibilities of his station, and with what fixedness of purpose he applied himself to their fulfillment. Though the prophet was most eminently qualified for the work to which he was called, and faithfully discharged the duties of his office, yet the result of his labor was most disheartening. He deeply lamented before God his want of success, by exclaiming, "I have labored in vain and spent my strength

for nought and in vain." Yet he could add, "Surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God." And in the same connection he says, "Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength." So also in the words of the text, "Who hath believed our report?"

You will perceive that the inquiry before us contains an APPEAL and a COMPLAINT, to which I shall now direct your attention.

Let us then consider the words,

I.—AS AN APPEAL.

The prophet addresses himself to those to whom he had been commissioned, and he declares —they themselves being judges—that he had faithfully dispensed to them the word of the Lord. This he denominates a *report;* implying evidently, the prominent doctrines of the gospel —the *news of Salvation*—through the sufferings and death of the promised Messiah, who should be "wounded for our transgressions and bruised

for our iniquities." This *doctrine*, or *report*, he fully exhibits in the subsequent parts of this chapter, from which we may learn more particularly,

1. *The Nature and Importance of this Report.*

The prophet Isaiah was an example of holy and entire consecration to the work in which he was engaged, as well as persevering diligence and fidelity in the prosecution of the great end of his labors, even though he encountered the most violent opposition, and exposed himself to the most alarming dangers. When the word of the Lord came to him, he did not inquire with what dispositions the people would receive the the message from his lips—whether it would call forth their enmity or awaken a spirit of cheerful obedience to the will of God. Fearless of the issue, he spoke the word with all boldness "whether men would hear or forbear." It was enough for him that he appeared before them as the prophet of the Lord, and that his communications were marked with the impress of the authority of high Heaven itself. He knew that if

they turned a deaf ear to his instructions, and refused to hearken to his messages, it would not be merely a rejection of his authority, but a direct contempt of the Holy One of Israel. Hence he makes his appeal directly to their hearts, and tells them that what he had spoken to them was not a "cunningly devised fable," nor a matter of trifling import; but a "*report*" of infinite moment, the reception or rejection of which, would tell upon the happiness or misery of their souls throughout the endless ages of eternity. It was this thought which led him to enter into details, and to furnish them in this chapter with an epitome of the whole gospel; or with an abstract of all that was contained in this "report." He was well aware that the Lord would require them to render a strict and impartial account of the improvement they had made of their privileges; and therefore he labored to impress their minds with an abiding sense of their responsibility, and to convince them that "where much is given, much will be required." If increased privileges produce increased obligations, he might well as-

sure them that a solemn day of reckoning was approaching, and that they would be held responsible for the improvement they should make, and the means of grace which they had enjoyed; and in order that they might be left entirely without excuse, he makes his *appeal* to their hearts and consciences: "Who hath believed our report?"

And may I not, my Christian friends, make the same *appeal* to you this day? Like Isaiah, I have been entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation. I have brought to you the "report" of the gospel. I have unfolded to you its nature, and declared its value and importance. I have told you what would be result of repentance or rejection; and though I lay no claim to the spirit of inspiration, which the prophet enjoyed, yet I can say with perfect confidence, God is my witness, that "I have kept back nothing that is profitable for you." You also know—I make the appeal fearlessly—that I have faithfully, impartially, and without regard to the frowns or the smiles of men, proclaimed to you what I honestly believed to be the

truth as it is in Jesus. The word of God, as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, has been the only fountain from whence I have endeavored to send forth streams for the refreshment of all who travel Zionward, and for the conviction and salvation of careless sinners. Nothing has been kept back that could promote either of these ends, but every part of the great system of redemption has been exhibited to your view with all clearness and simplicity, in its excellency, value and importance. The doctrines which have been preached, I am bold to affirm, are the doctrines of the Bible. And with reference to them, I can say in the language of Paul, "I believed, and therefore have I spoken."

It has been my constant aim to set before you all the truths of that precious gospel which brings "glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and good will towards men." In all my ministrations I have labored to give a *peculiar prominence* to those doctrines of grace, which in every age have been made the "wisdom of God" and the "power of God" in the salvation of sinners. That your

minds might be imbued with ennobling sentiments, your souls filled with heavenly consolation, and that the moral elevation of your character might be promoted, the Lord Jesus has been set before you in all his essential dignity, as the Lord of "life and glory;" in the perfection of his mediatorial services as the only "Mediator between God and man;" in the efficacy of his atoning sacrifice, as cleansing us from all sin; in the prevalence and perpetuity of his intercessions as our faithful High Priest; and in the fullness and sufficiency of his grace as our all in all. This has been the sum and substance of all our "*report*" which has been brought to you from Sabbath to Sabbath. This has been regarded as the foundation on which all our hopes of immortality are built. By my personal indebtedness to this salvation, by the unspeakable value of every undying soul entrusted to my care, I have felt that a necessity was laid upon me to preach Christ Jesus and "him crucified." Your attention has constantly been directed to this Saviour in all the offices he bears, in all the relations he sustains and

in all the benefits he secures. Every sermon and address delivered to you, has been sprinkled, as it were, with the blood of atonement. You have been told of Christ's condescension and grace in becoming a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," and how he was "wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities." He has been exhibited to your view as he appeared in the garden of Gethsemane, prostrate on the ground, bathed in bloody sweat, when the powers of darkness came upon him, when the cup of sorrows was put into his hand, when frail humanity, trembling, shuddering, shrinking, was forced to offer the pitiful prayer, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." The tragic scene of Calvary, together with its preludes and consequences, has been depicted before your eyes. You have been led to the brow of the mount, to that consecrated spot where the work of redemption was accomplished in behalf of lost and ruined sinners. You have been pointed to the crown of thorns that encircled his sacred head and to the purple stream that trickled down from his temples. You

have been told of the bitter anguish that heaved his bosom when hanging on the accursed tree, enduring the heavy pressure of the sins of the world and the hidings of his Father's countenance. You have been invited to look upon the pale visage of the dying sufferer when the spear of the Roman soldier entered his side, and drew forth that precious life's blood which alone can cleanse from all sin. The joyful tidings of his triumphant resurrection, by which "he was declared to be the Son of God with power," have been announced, together with the benefits resulting therefrom, especially, to his believing people. You have been led to Olivet, where you have beheld the risen Saviour, mounting on his cloudy chariot, rising higher and higher into the heavens, until your vision could reach no farther, and he was taken out of your sight. There, on the right hand of the Father, you have been told, he sits enthroned as a Prince and a Saviour, carrying on the work which he commenced on earth, making continual intercessions for his people "according to the will of God." You have been reminded,

that when all his purposes in the government of the world are accomplished, and all the plans of his providence and grace shall be brought to a termination, and all his children gathered into his fold, he will come again with power and great glory; that he will summon the universe before his tribunal and decide the destiny of the whole intelligent creation. Such is the *nature* and such the *importance* of the "*report*" that has been published to you from Sabbath to Sabbath and from year to year for so long a period. To-day it ends.

But we proceed to call your attention,

2. To the *end* for which this *report* has been made—that it might be *accepted and believed.*

Whatever has been the peculiar object of our message, its grand design has been to lead guilty, dying, perishing sinners to a pardoning, life-giving Saviour, and hence the ultimate application of such message has always been to Christ Jesus, as the Lamb of God, slain for poor sinners. All has been intended and directly calculated, if rightly received, to exhibit the Lord Jesus in all his fullness, to convince sinners of their need of him,

and to persuade them to receive the gracious offers of pardon and salvation as freely made through the merits of his death. To secure this end every motive, whether of an alarming or an alluring nature which the word of Jesus furnishes, has been employed. Sinners have been urged to close in with the terms of salvation, by the tender mercies of our God, the dying love of a Saviour; by the terrors of the law, by the hopes and consolations of the gospel, by the torments of hell; by the joys and glories of Heaven; and by all that is valuable in time, as well as all that is blissful and glorious, or agonizing and tormenting in eternity. To this purpose the Lord Jesus has been exhibited to you in all the fullness of his mediatorial character, as a sympathizing High Priest, touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and ever ready to compassionate the miserable. With the same view he has been set before you as the brightness of the Father's glory, on whose head, when all earthly crowns shall have mouldered, and those who wear them shall have been forgotten, the crown of immortal glory

shall triumphantly rest through eternal ages. And is not the Redeemer, the only mediator between God and man, the Lord of life and glory, the Sovereign of the universe, the Judge of heaven and earth, entitled to your best affections, and your undivided service? Should not the consideration of your dependence, your interest, your responsibility and your high destiny, prompt you at once to yield yourselves up to him, as "living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

And to call forth your longing desires after that blessed world, under the exalted hopes of heaven, the riches of that inheritance prepared for the people of God, have been spread before you in all their unfading nature and enduring perpetuity. That you might be fitted for the enjoyment of that inheritance, you have been exhorted to give all diligence to "make your calling and election sure;" to "fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on eternal life;" to live by faith on the Son of God; to cultivate holiness of heart and life, and to "press towards the mark

for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." And that you might finish your course with joy and receive a full reward, you have been encouraged to look with patience "for that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired of all that believe." Thus every motive by which you might be inclined to yield a cheerful compliance with the terms of salvation, has been set before you and urged upon your attention.

We notice

3. *Those to whom our "report" has been brought.*

In fulfillment of the commission with which we have been entrusted, it is believed that no class of persons have been overlooked or neglected. All have received a portion in due season and been alike furnished with counsel and direction, admonition and encouragement, warning and reproof, suited to their state and condition. The sinner has been exhorted with all tenderness and compassion, to flee from the wrath to come and to lay hold on the hope set before him in the gospel.

The people of God have been urged to adorn their Christian profession by a holy life and conversation, and to set an example worthy of imitation. Under their diversified circumstances and afflictions, appropriate consolations have been administered and promises adapted to their peculiar situation, have been placed before them, for their encouragement and support. The wandering backslider has been entreated by considerations of personal benefit and parental solicitude to return to the Shepherd and Bishop of his soul. In a word, the old and the young, the rich and the poor, the saint and the sinner, have all, in varied circumstances, relations and prospects, received such messages as were calculated to promote their temporal, spiritual and eternal welfare.

Thus, then, my Christian friends, we make our *appeal* to you this day and say with the prophet, "Who hath believed our report?" While to some it has proved a "savor of life unto life," to others we fear, it has been a "savor of death unto death."

Let us now proceed to consider the text

II.—AS A COMPLAINT.

It was a melancholy reflection to the prophet that he had "labored in vain and spent his strength for naught and in vain." He had been unwearied and diligent in his efforts to promote the well being of his people, but they were deaf to his entreaties, and altogether incorrigible under his warnings and reproofs. They treated both him and his messages with the most deliberate contempt; they openly avowed their hostility to him and his office, and proclaimed their fixed determination to reject his word and withstand all his efforts. The awful insensibility and indifference which they manifested, often drew from him the most bitter lamentations. He wept over them while he contemplated the deep-rooted enmity to God that rankled in their bosom, and the dreadful judgments that were impending over them. What tenderness for their welfare he particularly exhibited in the earnestness and importunity with which he supplicated Heaven's best blessing in their behalf. "For Zion's sake," said

he, "will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake will I not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth."

Human nature, my brethren, is the same in all ages; the same alike in principle and in practice. And the enmity of the depraved heart against the truth of God's word, discovers itself equally now as in the days of the prophet. Who is there now, that realizes the importance of the work and the fearful responsibility that attaches to the ministerial office, but must enter into the feelings of the prophet, when he finds that his efforts have resulted in disappointment? How often are we compelled to take up the complaint, "All the day long have we stretched forth our hands to a disobedient and a gainsaying people!" "Who hath believed our report and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" Nothing tends more to paralyze our exertions and discourage our hearts than such unfruitfulness and want of success under the faithful exhibition of divine truth.

When we look over our congregations, how

many do we see who have sat under the droppings of the sanctuary from Sabbath to Sabbath, from year to year; yea, for series of years, and still remain as insensible and as indifferent to the voice of mercy as when their ears were first saluted with the sound of the gospel! Or rather, they have become so hardened under the repeated warnings and exhortations of the word of God, as to awaken the fearful apprehension, that the things which make for peace are already forever hidden from their eyes. Oh! who can describe the feelings of the faithful servant of Christ, when at the last day he will see many, many of his hearers with the mass of the impenitent, ready to go down into the blackness of darkness, the place of torment, the scene of everlasting misery; there to endure the horrors of a living death; there to feel the gnawings of the worm that shall never die, and the agony of the fire that shall never be quenched.

The want of efficiency in a preached gospel, it is to be feared, is often owing to the spirit and temper of the professed followers of Christ.

There have been seasons when I have witnessed the most evident tokens of the presence of God's spirit and the clearest indications of his refreshing influences; when a cloud of mercy seemed to hover over us, and while lingering, distilled drops of divine grace, by which saints were invigorated, and sinners awakened, convinced and converted; and suddenly the cloud was withdrawn and a parching drought succeeded. And why was it? Alas! the cause was too apparent, and might easily be traced to an influence which ought never to have been exerted. Seldom do the people of God consider what effects, either for good or evil, may and often do result from their conduct upon those around them. Why, Christian friends, every step you take, is critical, every thought you cherish is likely to become a principle, influencing your future conduct and that of multitudes of others, who are guided by your example. God alone knows the consequences. You cannot move without touching some chord that may vibrate long after your heads are laid in the dust, and the effects of

which may be felt on the other side of the globe and extend into eternity itself. Often have I felt a deep, a trembling solicitude for the ark of God, under the most favorable indications of the Spirit's influence on the hearts of sinners, when something has arisen among those from whom better things might have been expected, by which every thing pleasing was completely dissipated, and was succeeded by darkness and spiritual gloom. If prayer meetings are neglected, if ordinances are slighted, if a spirit of strife and vain glory is manifested, and thereby the Spirit of God, being grieved, takes his departure, *it is no wonder* that many of those who felt an anxiety on the subject of religion should become hardened in their course, and return to the world, confirmed in their evil ways. It is no wonder that we should see the most salutary convictions crushed, and a tenderness of conscience succeeded by hardness of heart and unblushing unbelief. Oh! how lamentable that Jesus should thus be wounded in the house of his professed friends; that his own disciples

should pierce him and thus should become accessory to the everlasting perdition of some who are influenced by their example. Awful beyond description is the import of that declaration of Christ, "Wo unto the world because of offences; for it must needs be that offences come, but wo unto that man by whom the offence cometh." Should not the threatening of the Saviour fill us with alarm and prompt us to inquire with zeal, diligence and circumspection, how far we have contributed, by our conduct, in casting stumbling blocks in the way of others, and thus have turned them from the right way of the Lord. How should we weep tears of blood and pray with the Psalmist, "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation—cast us not away from thy presence and take not thy Holy Spirit from us! Restore unto us the joy of thy salvation, and uphold us with thy free Spirit; then will we teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee!

But, brethren, while I have reason to adopt the complaint of the prophet in reference to many

who have derived no saving benefits from my protracted ministry among them; while there are some, it is to be feared, to whom my commission has proved only like that given to Isaiah, "Making the heart of this people fat, and making their ears heavy," yet it is a cheering consideration, productive of the most lively joy, that God has given me to see the fruits of my labors, in the ingathering of many precious souls into his kingdom. To be the instrument, in the hands of God, of converting a single sinner from the error of his ways, and thus save a soul from death, is indeed a source of the purest joy. But how is this joy enhanced when we have the satisfaction of beholding multitudes around us, who have become the seals of our ministry, and who will be crowns of our rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus. Let those to whom this ministry has been sanctified, bless the God of all grace for the rich displays of mercy in their behalf, and not waste their anxieties about the feeble instrument, except that he may still share an interest in their prayers and sympathies. It has pleased God to

employ the instrumentality of men in the accomplishment of his purposes of love and mercy, and to commit this "treasure into earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us."

Before I apply the subject, suffer me to furnish you with a few statistics and reminiscences from which it will appear, that as a church, our history has been somewhat eventful, that amid persecutions that ought to belong to the dark ages, and in the face of privations that might have disheartened the most fearless, we have enjoyed, in no small degree, the help of the Lord and shared his continued favor and approbation.

At the time of my settlement as Pastor of these churches, forty years ago, the number in communion, as taken from the list of communing members—for this was all the record that could be found—was 70; 30 in this church, (New Rhinebeck) and 40 in the Sharon church. Since then and until the present time, the number received into the communion of these two churches, is 1250; averaging about 30 a year. The largest number

received in one year, was 192. Out of these two churches by colonizing and setting up for themselves, 6 new churches, besides the two original ones, have been formed. Besides contributing largely of our members to the formation and strengthening of other churches, the present membership of this charge is about 390. Seven new houses of worship have been built. During the time of my connection with these churches, the ordinance of baptism has been administered to about 1300, including infants and adults. And it is worthy of note, that quite a number of those who were baptized by me in their infancy, were joined by me in holy wedlock, and their offspring baptized; and in a few instances married. The number of marriages that have been solemnized is about 800. The amount of money paid by those two churches for houses of worship and fixtures—including the one lost by fire—is about $12,000. The costs of litigation, pro and con, together with rents and accounts, was $10,000. This was a most unjust and wicked claim that we were compelled to pay. We have paid for the

building of churches in other places, and for other objects, about $5000. For purely benevolent purposes, such as Bible, missionary and educational, $8000, of which $350 has been paid during the present year. The agregate of money raised by these two churches during my ministry, is $35,000; or an average of $800 a year. This sum, it should be remembered, does not include the ordinary expenses of the churches, or the support of the pastor.

I have preached in this time about 1700 funeral discourses. The greatest number in one year was 76; in one week 7; in one day 3. What an army have gone before me! I have preached during this time 10,000 discourses in the congregations, besides special efforts elsewhere, and funeral discourses. By the blessing of God we have enjoyed 25 distinct revivals of religion. Of the number received into these churches, 13 are now in the ministry; 1 at the head of a flourishing collegiate institute, and 3 are in the various stages of preparation for the ministry.

From a view of the statement which has now

been made of these churches, it will be seen that, notwithstanding the impediments that were thrown in our way, and the opposition that we have met with, the sea of persecution, with high rolling waves, through which we have passed—of which we have said comparatively nothing—we have enjoyed a measure of almost uninterrupted prosperity, for which we have reason to be thankful to the great Head of the Church. God grant that this prosperity may long continue, and that all who love our Zion may pray for its increase; the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. May no star named *Wormwood*, ever shed over these sanctuaries its pestilential beams, nor the finger of desolation ever inscribe *Ichabod* upon its walls. And may the God of peace that brought again from the dead the Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect to do his will, stablish, strengthen and settle you, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight!

A few words in the way of application and I have done,

My Christian Friends, God in his gracious and inscrutable providence has been pleased to preserve our relations to each other for a season unusually long. The connection between a Christian minister and the people of his charge is peculiarly tender and interesting in its character, and momentous in its results. It is therefore a matter of some importance to know in what light the ministry should be contemplated by him who bears the office and by them who enjoy its benefits. Doubtless it should ever be regarded in the light of eternity and with a constant reference to our future accountability. We know it must come to an end. The dispensation of grace will not last forever. He who ministers in holy things at the altar, and you who enjoy the privileges of that ministry must alike pass into another world and be confronted before the tribunal of Jehovah. And O how solemn, how deeply interesting to us all will be the disclosures of that great day of retribution!

My unconverted friends, you, whom I have often addressed with all tenderness and affection,

in language of warning, entreaty and expostulation, suffer me once more to point you to the Lamb of God, who alone can take away your sins and make you meet for heaven. Often has Christ Jesus been set forth crucified before your eyes. His cross has been reared in your sight and you have been exhorted to look up to it with penitence and contrition of soul. Salvation through the blood of the great atoning Sacrifice, has been proclaimed in your hearing. And you have had your convictions of guilt and danger, and been led to form purposes of amendment; but these purposes have all proved transient as the morning cloud and evanescent as the early dew. And some of you are still closing your ears and hardening your hearts. Instead of yielding to your convictions, you are struggling against them. O, beware, lest the struggle be determined too late. There is a limit to the forbearance of God. His spirit shall not always strive. He may be soon provoked to depart from you and leave you to fill up the measure of your iniquity. His patience, which has long waited for you, may soon become

exhausted and give way to his inexorable wrath. You have not a moment to lose. On the present your everlasting destiny may depend. "To-day," then, while you yet "hear his voice, harden not your hearts, lest he swear in his wrath you shall not enter into his rest."

Ye fathers and mothers in Israel, live as becometh your character and high vocation. Your hoary heads and increasing infirmities remind you that your days upon the earth are almost numbered. Soon your last conflict will come. You know in whom you have believed, and if faithful, that he will not forsake you in the final struggle with the angel of death, but will surely give you the victory and crown you with immortality and eternal life.

A word to the *young* before me in conclusion. My *young friends*, you are the hope of the church; to you she looks to sustain her interests and to pray for her prosperity. Soon your fathers and mothers must be gathered to their rest. Will you take their places? Quite a goodly number of you have "remembered your Creator in the days of

your youth," and have been ready to attest your allegiance to God as your Father, to Jesus Christ as your Saviour, and to the Holy Ghost as your Comforter and guide. Almighty God keep you in his fear, that you may be useful in your day and generation to his church, in strengthening its cords and extending its bounds to the end of your days. But a large number are still out of Christ. I would call upon you; will you take the places of your fathers and mothers among the sacramental hosts of God's people, or will you be content to live without Christ, without hope in the world? Let me ask, with the most tender solicitude for your welfare, do you belong to Christ? Have you given yourselves to him? If not, do it now; delay not. "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation."

And now I "commend you all to God and to the word of his grace, who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy."

The God of peace be with you all. AMEN.

CHAPTER XIII.

ELEMENTS OF CHARACTER.

In *kind*, as in *quantity*, the harvest answers to the seed. The laws of propagation in this respect, are the same in the moral and in the physical world, differing slightly, perhaps, in the degree of variation, owing to the modification of circumstances. That "like produces like" is true, not only generically, but equally with regard to the nicer shades of variety. Wheat yields wheat, and "every seed his own body."

Ministerial fruits are as capable of classification as types of character or grades of talent. The same people develop differently under the ministrations of different men. Some give prominence to the intellect, others to the moral feelings. One is characteristically metaphysical, another is pre-eminently practical. Here is a pastor all of whose preaching tends to bring out the educational aspects of religion. There you hear a man who

has little to do with any thing but experience. The man of intellect gathers around him those who are chiefly controlled by intellect, while the man of emotion sways the emotional masses. And so of every other governing element. Hence, other things being equal, results correspond with peculiarities, and the degree of adaptation determines the measure of success.

The application of these views to the servant of God, whose life and labors have to some extent been unfolded, cannot fail to direct attention to the wisdom and goodness of the Chief Shepherd in sending him to that particular portion of his vineyard. He would have been useful anywhere, but probably in no other locality to the extent he was there. He was "the right man in the right place." God knew the man and he knew the people; and perhaps no other man would so "naturally have cared for their state."

Intellectually, Mr. Wieting was neither very profound nor very prompt. Nor did he possess great breadth or brilliancy. His perceptions were not always clear, his memory never remarkable,

his judgment seldom decisive. Great effort was usually the result of great excitement. His mind was brought into activity, not so much by inherent energy as by external influences. Elevation was not natural, concentration was difficult. He had little ideality and less abstraction. In a word, his intellectual superiority consisted chiefly in the fact that his mind was strikingly in harmony with and strictly loyal to his moral nature. In this respect few equalled, less excelled him.

His moral nature was remarkable for scope and susceptibility. His emotions were deep, his impulses strong, his devotional feelings very ardent. In religious exercises all his powers were called in requisition. As has been seen, he was capable of awful agony and of extacies of a corresponding character. Not unfrequently were the internal forces so intensely agitated that his appearance seemed to indicate great physical distress.

His mirthfulness was unbounded. It flowed and sparkled as from an exhaustless fountain. Nothing humorous escaped his attention, and in social intercourse, the opportunity to indulge in

it, was a temptation too strong to be resisted. His perceptions of the ridiculous were keen, and often in advance of the discoveries of others, his sides would shake while his face was sober. And the transitions from the deepest solemnity to the wildest hilarity were sometimes so sudden as to be most surprising. Again and again has he been known to go from the house of God, where numbers were on their knees crying for mercy, and where his prayers for them seemed to rend the heavens, to the family of a friend, surrounded perhaps by those with whom he had just left the throne of grace, and engage in pleasantries and jesting, calculated, one would think, to drive away every serious thought and impression. And yet, strange to say, his levity seemed to have no such effect. So far as could be determined, neither he nor others were injured by it. In an instant he would change his aspect and his voice, feel himself and cause others to feel, the overpowering presence of God. Strangers were often tried with his course, but his friends, as they became accustomed to it, ceased to be afflicted by it.

Mr. Wieting was wonderful in prayer. With God, he probably was not more successful than many others are. But in his devotions he exerted a powerful influence over his hearers. He has been known in public to pray a half an hour, to rise in interest every moment and to carry his audience with him to the last. He never adopted the familiar, conversational style, which some suppose is so effective. His address to the Supreme Being was always elevated and deferential. Yet he spoke to him as if in his immediate presence, and plead as though he felt he was right and must prevail. It was remarkable that the arrangement of his thoughts was more systematic and the flow of his language more natural in his prayers than in his preaching; a fact suggestive of his nearness to God, and of the effect of that nearness upon his nature. Prayer with him was something more than formality. It was a means to an end. With philosophical objections he was not troubled. He took God at his word. His faith was simple and rested solely upon the divine promises.

"It has pleased God by the foolishness of

preaching to save them that believe." Preaching is peculiar to the Christian ministry. Private members of the church are expected to use all other means for spiritual improvement, this and the administration of the ordinances excepted. Nor should the least objection be urged against *lay preaching*, so far as it can be made available for the extension of the Redeemer's Kingdom. But the most enthusiastic advocate for indiscriminate activity will scarcely think it wise or safe to dispense with professional preaching. After all that can be said in favor of other methods of instruction and other means of usefulness,

> "The pulpit, in the sober use
> Of its legitimate, peculiar powers,
> Must stand acknowledged while the world shall stand,
> The most important and effectual guard,
> Support and ornament of virtue's cause."

Mr. Wieting's power was in the pulpit. With all his tact and diligence in other departments, but for his preaching abilities his ministry would have been a failure.

The *hortatory* style was his forte. To this he

was peculiarly adapted, and during the period of his greatest efficiency, no other was attempted. He selected experimental and practical themes. With abstract principles, difficult dogmas, or doubtful passages of scripture, he seldom meddled. The intellect was not overlooked; the fundamental doctrines were not neglected. But he was most successful in reaching the intellect by means of the moral feelings, and in maintaining the doctrines by the enforcement of their practical applications. In all his sermons there was an object. His lines of thought were usually legitimate, his arrangements harmonious. But he made little show of the formula of logic, seldom indulged in rhetorical flourishes, used illustrations sparingly, and had almost nothing to do with anecdotes. With him *system* was valuable only as it focalized light and heat; reason as it become a reflector of revelation; and argument as it rendered truth apparent. In his manner, the gospel was a great "electrical machine," managed by Christ himself; while it was the duty of his ministers to place the wires in contact with the hearts of the people,

over which the "Holy Ghost, like streams of ethereal fire," might descend and melt them into penitence.

During this stage of his ministry he wrote but little. In the desk he used nothing more than a short skeleton, containing divisions, sub-divisions, catchwords, and the like, very briefly noted. And he always succeeded best when even this was most neglected. But after a while he grew more expository and argumentative in his method. As a consequence he extended his sketches and confined himself more closely to them; until at length the sketch became a fully written sermon.

Here he evidently made a serious mistake. He never should have taken a manuscript of any sort into the pulpit. To a greater or less extent, it always was a source of embarrassment to him. His mind never acted with the uniformity of a machine. The ideas which he could command in his study were insipid as compared with those which rushed upon him in the presence of his audience. Nor when the "divine phrenzy was breathing into his thoughts and inspiring his

speech," could he be satisfied with the connections and costume given them when emotion slumbered and the intellect alone was plodding at its task. Hence it often happened that his mind was too elevated for his manuscript, and that, with his wings entangled in its meshes, he was disqualified for flight. Besides, his chirography was never very legible; and as his sketches and sermons were always hastily written, and every page closely interlined and blurred by words or letters brushed out with his finger, with his voice upon the highest key and a fearful impetuosity of utterance, he frequently lost his place or failed to decipher what he had written, thus causing confusion and inarticulation. Of the change which in this manner come over him he was perfectly conscious. He deeply deplored it and frequently spoke of being "tied up," especially in exhortation. But he claimed that it was unavoidable; that his memory was less reliable and that he had less control over himself. And doubtless this was true; but the probability is that it was the *effect* not the *cause* of the change. The fact is that all

the powers of the mind and moral nature are reliable about in the proportion that we make dependence upon them. They refuse to serve us when we refuse to trust them. Moreover, success in extemporaneous speaking depends less upon memory than is supposed. Only with the materials and outlines is it to be taxed. For the rest a well disciplined mind may confide in suggestion, the inspiration of occasions, and—shall it not be said—divine influence. The peculiar excellence of this method of preaching largely consists in its adjustability; the facility with which a discourse may be shaped and directed by the pressure of present circumstances.

Had Mr. Wieting written more and with greater care, but never taken a scrap to the desk, he evidently would have attained a higher standard of eloquence, and, perhaps, rendered his preaching more effective. But tested by results, the ultimate standard of true excellence, all must agree that as a preacher he held an elevated rank. Few, indeed, have used the pulpit with equal advantage for the same length of time. Less still have been so uniformly successful.

O that the Lord of the harvest may send more such laborers.

The severest ordeal of a minister is met in the capacity of a Pastor. Much importance is attached to this department, though the views and expectations of the church respecting it are without classification and without limit. According to current opinions, pastoral duties embrace every kind of work which the *people think* should be done in the parish, preaching excepted. Practically, the Pastor is a sort of congregational *pack-horse*, and is required to bear every sort of burden, even to the supervision of church repairs and the collection of charitable funds. No minister of common discernment will accept such opinions, though as a matter of necessity he may submit to much of this drudgery.

Mr. Wieting assumed the duties of the Pastor in the broadest sense, and the variety and sum total of the services which in this capacity he rendered during his forty years in the same field, would scarcely be credited could they be described. It is perhaps not too much to say that two-thirds

of his time was spent among his people. The writer has known most of the members of this charge for many years, and been familiarly acquainted with not a few of them; yet he cannot remember that he ever heard a single complaint that Mr. Wieting was delinquent in this respect. There was a demand for much personal labor; his social tendencies admirably fitted him for it, and withal, he was very fond of visiting. Nor did he feel this tax upon his time as do those whose studies are more extensive and more systematically pursued. Accordingly, he seldom made pastoral calls, but *family visits*, which meant spending an afternoon or staying over night. During those visitations, unless there was more than ordinary interest in the church, the common topics of the day and everything special in family affairs came within the scope of conversation. Except in cases of particular anxiety or delinquency, he seldom made direct personal inquiries respecting the spiritual condition of his parishioners. Few ministers ever understood their members better; but he obtained his information by other means.

Indeed he was not remarkably skillful in encountering the evasions of the backslidden, the difficulties of the half-awakened, the cavils of the carnal minded, or the subtle objections of the sceptical. In all these respects he accomplished more by his prayers than by his conversation. In fact, his visits were more social than religious, though the means of much good. They were productive of familiarity and confidence; and as his people were in the habit of consulting him about most of their affairs, convenient opportunities were thus afforded for imparting advice. As a general councillor he frequently assumed the most delicate and burdensome responsibilities, involving great risk and perplexity; yet he seldam failed to satisfy the parties or in some way to subserve the interests of the church.

His plan was to make his visits while he met his appointments. One week he would preach evening after evening in the several school-houses, and visit family after family during a succession of days, in one section of the congregation, and the next week transfer his labors of like character

to another section. And year after year those weekly rounds of preaching and visiting were continued.

There evidently was a time when this course was wise and effective. It was substantially going out into the "highways and hedges and compelling" the masses to come in. But continued, as it was, after it had fully subserved its purpose, it proved seriously injurious to both pastor and people. It imposed an unwarrantable tax upon the pastor's time and strength; and it lessened the general interest in and the attendance upon the stated church services. No people will be at much pains to go to the house of God on the Sabbath, who are sure to have the gospel brought to their doors during the week. And, besides, while no other man can or ought to sustain the precedent, it will be a source of embarrassment for many years to come, though ultimately it must be abandoned. During the last years of his ministry Mr. Wieting became deeply conscious of the evil, but he felt that it would not be possible for him to apply the remedy.

Outside of the domestic relations there are perhaps no ties so strong and so tender as those which bind an appreciative and a confiding people to an affectionate and a faithful pastor. Their mutual interests and obligations, how vital, how solemn! And when, as in the case under review, they have been extended over nearly a half a century, how delicate, how comprehensive, how complicated! And the affections between this Pastor and his flock, were all, which under even such circumstances, could have been expected. And the best evidence here is found in the fact, that both before and immediately after Mr. Wieting's death, surrounding pastors were often heard to say, "Mr. Wieting was everything to his people; no man can fill his place."

Shortly after the departure of the loved Shepherd, two prominent members of the flock, like the two disciples after the Saviour's crucifixion, "talked together of all these things which had happened," and one said, "We may get another minister, but we shall never get another Brother Wieting!" The other, gently remonstrating, an-

swered, "He is gone; and we must not be unbelieving respecting a successor." With flowing tears and tremulous utterance, the first replied, "I know it; but how can I help it when I remember what he has done for us!"

Another, when reminded that to make too much of Mr. Wieting's ministry, might embarrass a successor, with choking emotion, exclaimed, "Then I fear we will never have another pastor." And it is impossible, even now, to mingle with that afflicted people, and witness the significant and sorrowful testimonials of their attachments, without saying, as with regard to Lazarus, the Jews said of Jesus, "Behold how *they* loved him!" And they will love his successors more, because they loved him so well. A few brief words more must close this chapter.

The Franckean Evangelic Lutheran Synod, in the broadest and in the highest sense was, ecclesiastically, Mr. Wieting's Home. He never questioned the propriety of its organization; he never doubted the truthfulness and tenability of its positions; he never hesitated in committing

himself to its interests. The many arrows, sharp and pointed, hurled against it from whatever source, he felt as piercing his own heart. His entire nature was in harmony with it, and it would have been difficult for him to have become associated with any other body. He never missed a session. For ten years—six in succession—he was its president, and for nearly as many more he held other official positions. And few ecclesiastics have enjoyed the respect, confidence and affection of their fellow members, as did he. After his health began to fail and his friends looked upon him as upon the fruit, fully ripe and just ready to fall, it was painfully pleasant to notice, at each succeeding session, with what increasing filial tenderness he was regarded.

The following is a quotation from the Minutes of 1869.

"Brother P. Wieting, the cherished and loved founder of this Synod, gave a brief summary of his pastoral labors in the Gardnersville district, during the long period of forty years. And while expressing his warm attachment to this body and

the belief that, in consequence of increasing infirmity, this might be the last time he would meet with us, the whole Synod was deeply moved, and many eyes were filled with tears. At the suggestion of the chair, a season was spent in prayer, conducted by Brothers M. Kling and N. Van Alstine"—both spiritual children.

None who witnessed will ever forget that scene. It was, indeed, the last meeting, and worthy of being such. From a gathering like that, the venerable Patriarch felt that it was good to go home. Exhaustion compelled him to leave before the close; and when the body meets again—now soon to occur—his place will be vacant, all with sorrowful interest will remember as prophetic "the words which he spoke, that they should see his face no more."

CHAPTER XIV.

LAST THINGS.

In the town of Sharon, Schoharie Co., N. Y., due south of what is known as Sharon Hill, and between what once were the Great Western and Lonenburg turnpikes—both now common highways—there lies a not very extensive sweep of land higher than all the surrounding hills, and thus affording a vast range of vision, embracing a good farming district, but singularly irregular and surpassingly diversified. Here, several acres, for the most part sloping towards the east, but extending west and south slightly beyond the summit, have been enclosed by a substantial and tastefully constructed fence, and beautifully laid out into lots, walks and carriage ways, as a burial place for the dead. This is Slate Hill Cemetery, taking its name from the nature of the geological formation.

Soon after this ground was opened, the Church

of Gardnersville, largely interested in it, selected one of the most desirable family plots, situated in the most elevated part, and presented the title of it to their Beloved Pastor. Doubtless the state of his health suggested the gift. Under no circumstances would it have been received without emotion; but feeble as he then was, the effect was overwhelming. The offering was manifestly as significant of their anticipations as of their kindly feelings. On this plot, by his own request, though his residence at the time of his death was perhaps a dozen miles away, the mortal remains of the Rev. Philip Wieting were interred.

Before the snows of 1870 had fully disappeared, by the politeness of *John I. Empie*, than whom, through the long term of his ministry, the Pastor had never found a better friend, the writer was conducted to the Cemetery, and permitted to look upon this, as yet, *lonely* grave. It remained as the undertaker left it, unless—what at this time was there, a wreath of "everlasting"—had subsequently been placed upon it by the hand of affection. Unchanged by the blight of the sea-

son, at the very portals of corruption, this precious testimonial was an impressive symbol of an immortality over which death has no dominion. Arrangements had already been made to honor that grave with a suitable monument, in the erection of which the church had coveted the privilege of sharing a part.

While standing here over the mouldering ashes of the dear departed Friend and Brother, with reflections upon the past and anticipations of the future which can neither be forgotten nor uttered, Mr. Empie broke the silent and sorrowful musings by saying, "From that grave you can see a large portion of the field, which, under Brother Wieting's culture, has produced a harvest of Ministers such as few pastors ever gathered. The former homes of *seven* at least lie within sight; and in all, not less than *fifteen* or *sixteen* of his spiritual children have entered or are preparing to enter the sacred calling." The latter part of this statement was not new, though by the force of the circumstances it was invested with new interest. *Fifteen* or *sixteen* embassadors for Christ sent

forth by the instrumentality of one of his servants! Surely, if that were all he had accomplished, he would not have lived in vain. But the fact itself, is not more valuable than the lesson it contains, if that lesson can be sufficiently explained. *Why so successful in this respect?*

It cannot be that a larger proportion of the class which God is pleased to employ in his vineyard, happened to be found just then in that particular division of the church. Nor may it be supposed that any number of purely providential causes combined to bring about such a result. The design of the Chief Shepherd must evidently be looked for in the peculiarities of the agent employed and of the labors he performed. To determine what these were will be to solve the problem.

The explanation most likely to be thought of is, that he made this an object of special attention and effort. And, with his known forecast and zeal for the church, it would not be reasonable to imagine that a matter of such moment could have been overlooked. He was strongly

aggressive in his aspirations and plans; he deeply sympathized with Zion in her destitutions, and was very earnest in the education of young men for the ministry. But there is no evidence that he made the enlargement of the profession a specialty. Clearly, others did so to a greater extent but with less success.

An earnest ministry is, without doubt, the offspring of a spiritual church. It is the highest sphere of Christian activity, to which, from honorable motives, only those of elevated piety will aspire. *Deep devotion* is the generating power of which the idea is begotten. It is the product of the moral nature, not of the intellect.

This simple statement must suffice. If accepted, the moral elements of Mr. Wieting's character and the type of religion which he propagated, as already set forth, will sufficiently explain why this class of the fruits of his ministry was so abundant. He kept his people in practical sympathy with the mission of Christ.

In a previous chapter, giving a representation of the condition of the charge when Mr. Wieting

entered upon it, the membership was put down at 200. The Anniversary Sermon, as will be seen, makes the number only 70; 40 at Sharon, and 30 at New Rhinebeck. The discrepancy is easily explained. The first was taken from the minutes of the Synod, the second from the communion record of the church. Statistical reports for ecclesiastical purposes, it is well known, are frequently taken from previous records, and accordingly do not always indicate the reality at the date they bear. And the probability is that the report in question was based upon such data. And it is possible that even the statement in the sermon may be an exaggeration. It rests upon a *communion record*, for which no date is given. The truth, therefore, *may be*, that the list of communicants in question was made years before Mr. Wieting commenced his ministry there, and the supposition is not unreasonable that the membership diminished rather than increased. However this may be, it is entirely evident that "the number in communion" when he assumed the pastoral relation did not exceed 70 in both churches.

The venerable Dr. Tyng, rector of St. George Church of New York city, whose popular eloquence has scarcely known a parallel, and whose fame as an efficient worker is world-wide, recently preached a sermon in which he summed up the fruits of his labors during his ministry of 25 years. His statements are; confirmations, 1074, renewal of "baptismal pledge," 900, marriages, 647, funerals, 350. And this in the large and crowded city of New York. Mr. Wieting, during a ministry of 40 years, in the sparsely populated country, received to membership 1250, baptized 1300, solemnized 800 marriages, and attended 1700 funerals!

Within the bounds of this charge when he entered upon it, there were two other churches of different denominations, either of which was stronger than either of Mr. Wieting's churches. Both continue to exist and are respectable in size and character. But with neither has there been any organic multiplication or territorial extension. In these respects they are still solitary and within their original limits. As has been

seen, if the two of which Mr. Wieting at first became pastor, and those which by legitimate propagation have sprung from them, largely as the fruit of his labors, are counted, there were, at the time of his death, eight churches, several of which were larger than either of the two brought into the comparison.

These statements indicate, in some measure, the success of his ministry, the secrets of which were EARNESTNESS, FIDELITY, PERSEVERANCE.

Though efficient to the last, Mr. Wieting did not, to the extent some preachers do, retain his power in the pulpit and his prestige with the public. The decline of his health was manifestly one reason. Another was, he lacked *progressive scholarship*. He had neither the time nor the taste for enlarged literary culture. Beyond his preparations for professional duties, he studied little. His library was small and composed mostly of books of reference. For many years he read but little besides his papers. It is easy to foresee the consequences, in a day of such intense mental activity and rapid advancement.

The masses can be managed only by those who are in practical sympathy with them, in order to which familiarity with general movements and habits of thought is indispensable. In capacity, Mr. Wieting never became superannuated. But he did not maintain that immediate connection with the public mind which is necessary to turn its ceaseless fluctuations to account. He was not ignorant of the latest "styles" in the religious world, but he did not acquire skill in the use of them. He was less effective in revivals, and this fact furnishes the explanation. Measures and men wax old together. The weapons with which he had done such wonderful execution, were largely thrown aside, and to those which took their place, he never became accustomed. Something also was doubtless due to the abatement of his physical energies and youthful enthusiasm, upon which, in popular movements, so much seems to depend.

Whether it was judicious during those last years, when his health was so unreliable and life itself was held by a tenure so uncertain, to con-

tinue the pastoral relation with all its cares and responsibilities, was a question frequently agitated by his best friends. Ministerial vacations he scarcely knew, and overtaxed, as both his physical and mental energies had been for so many years, it seemed that the interests of the charge must suffer and that the weakened props of his constitution must soon give way. Such apprehensions were not unreasonable, and the wonder is that they proved so nearly unfounded. And, embarrassed as were his efforts, it was surprising that the churches were sustained so well, and that with his multiplied infirmities, his strength endured so long. He was satisfied, as all were, that he needed rest; but how could the tie be broken? He loved the work: was strongly attached to the people; and as any change seemed to imply a radical rearrangement of every thing connected with the field, there was a mutual shrinking from the crisis so long as it could be avoided. But the other great crisis was now rapidly approaching, and providentially this was in good time as a preparation for that. His last

sickness soon succeeded his last anniversary and valedictory sermon.

The excellent mother of Mr. Wieting has elsewhere been mentioned—her severe trials in widowhood, the fact that she consecrated her son to the ministry at his baptism, her unfaltering fidelity towards him during the waywardness of his youth, and especially while he was at the Seminary. It remains to be said that she realized the fruitions of her faith. She lived to see that Son in the vigor of his manhood and the glory of his ministry; to hear him, with overpowering eloquence and earnestness, proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to witness, through his instrumentality, the ingathering of many precious souls to the church of the Redeemer. This child of her faith, with all the fervor of his ardent temperament and all the depth of his Christian feeling, during her declining years, recognized the claims of the filial relation with discriminating delicacy, moistened her dying pillow with his tears, followed her mortal remains to their final resting place, and bewailed his loss, as only such a son can bewail the loss of such a mother.

As the churches had made no arrangements for filling the vacancy occasioned by the dissolution of the pastoral relation, Mr. Wieting, without any cessation continued his labors with them for several months. His health was variable, sometimes too feeble to preach for several weeks, and then able to meet the appointments for considerable time with regularity and always with interest. And even now he could not turn a deaf ear to the cries of the destitute. A neighboring church, one of the children of his own charge, was left without the means of grace and looked to him for help. Nor did they look in vain. He preached for them several times, and agreed to supply them as his health would admit, until they could otherwise be provided for.

His last sermon was preached July 18th, 1869, in the new and beautiful church of Cobleskill, by invitation of the pastor, Rev. Mr. Ludden. It was on a communion occasion, and his theme was, the *Sufferings of Christ*, from Mark xiv. 34. "*My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death.*" The pastor said, "It was one of the most touching

and impressive sermons I ever heard, moving many to tears. He, and all present, felt that his work on earth was nearly completed. Though very feeble he spoke with much earnestness and seemed inspired with the divine power and holy unction, so characteristic of his early ministry."

During his brief sojourn at Cobleskill, Mr. Wieting's ministerial associations, especially with this esteemed pastor, were peculiarly pleasant. In referring to them Mr. Ludden says, "We were on the most intimate terms of friendship." And in speaking of a conversation which occurred on a certain evening while walking "arm in arm," respecting a remarkable revival to which allusion has elsewere been made, he says, "As Bro. Wieting vividly described his feelings on that memorable occasion, he seemed to live over again those precious scenes of his early ministry. The power of the Holy Spirit filled his soul and his whole frame trembled. Both of us were much affected. Indeed, I rarely ever heard a *sermon* which so deeply stirred the fountains of my soul."

Though for many years his system had been sinking, and during several extended intervals, his condition had been regarded as more or less alarming, yet his last sickness was comparatively brief. His sufferings were intense, but he bore them patiently and was wholly resigned to his situation. His trust in the Redeemer was unfaltering, and his anticipations of the future were peaceful. Fearlessly he entered the dark valley, and as the shadows deepened his faith triumphed and found expression in the language of the Psalmist, "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

As might have been expected, the "chamber where the good man met his fate," was thronged and cheered with the presence of many who were covetous of his parting blessings, in all of whose conversations and prayers he was greatly interested. Rev. Mr. Ludden, who visited and prayed with him frequently, remarks, "He always expressed thanks and spoke of the comfort which these calls afforded him." A few days before his departure, his old friend and room mate at the

Seminary, Rev. Mr. Senderling, called upon him. In giving an account of the interview and of the representations received of the state of his mind, he says, "He looked me full in the face, and exclaimed, 'I am trying to get the world all out, and Christ all in.'" He saw him again the day following, but he was too near the better land to be called back to consciousness in this. And here, on the banks of the dark, cold river, these servants of Christ, who first met as fellow pupils in the "school of the prophets," after many and diversified associations, during a long and eventful ministry, separated, to meet no more on earth. One, already relieved from toil and suffering, relieved from even the pang of parting, hastened to his rest and reward; the other, impressively reminded that he too must soon make the great transition, turned away to wait and work a little longer, before following the comrade of his early life to the "bourne whence no traveller returns."

In a closing paragraph of a lengthy letter, the Rev. Mr. Senderling uses the following touching language: "Away back in the past I contem-

plate with pleasure the intimate friendship we enjoyed in each other's society, and in our joint labors in the cause of the Redeemer. Many are the blessed scenes which loom up in that part of our history, and which tempt my pen to give them life on paper. I never abandoned my friendship for him, though times and seasons prevented the exercise of it. In the midst of, and through all our troubles I never lost the secret fear of God, reverence and tenderness in regard to Bro. Wieting. 'The memories of joys that are past are pleasing and mournful to the soul.'" *

Up to the last week reason remained unobscured. Occasionally his mind rose to ecstacy, but for the most part was very calm. He never betrayed the slightest fear, either of the pains of dying or of his final acceptance with God, though he often spoke of his desire to depart and be with Christ. Knowing how much devotional

* After transcribing the above quotation, and turning aside to shape the sentence which follows, a church paper came to hand, containing an obituary of Rev. William Ottman—the last of the four original standard bearers of the Synod. Gone—*all* gone; *Swackhamer, Lawyer, Wieting, Ottman!*

exercises contributed to his enjoyment, a company of young ladies, one evening, approached the window near which he was lying, and sang,

"I want to be among the angels."

He was tenderly affected. The wish he cherished was happily expressed in the song, and associated with the sweet influence of music, for the moment he seemed to realize its fruition. During the evening of his last Sabbath on earth, his companion seated herself by his bedside. Turning his eyes affectionately towards her, he reached first one hand then the other, and while she was holding both, with a very expressive countenance, he looked right in her face and made a strong effort to speak. But becoming conscious that death had placed the seal of silence upon his lips, he raised his eyes and hands towards heaven to symbolize the sentiments and emotions which were struggling for utterance. Of the significance of that act the reader must be his own interpreter. Under the control of reason, it was his last. With that heavenly aspiration the

Godlike power took its upward flight. Here the conscious struggle ended.

At 10 o'clock, on Tuesday evening, Sept. 7th, 1869,—at his own beautiful residence, surrounded by his stricken wife, sorrowing children and other friends—in the same locality where he was ordained to the work of the ministry, where he preached his last sermon, and where he enjoyed his last communion, Rev. Philip Wieting, peacefully, triumphantly, closed his earthly career, within sixteen days of sixty-nine years of age.

All is quiet now; the dread suspense is ended; death has done its work; the sufferer rests at last. The loved form, so long the object of so much solicitude, lies silent, motionless, cold, and is committed, to be cared for, to other hands. The stricken ones cease to be actors in the scene. Their anxiety has given place to grief, their afflictions have deepened into bereavement. Crape hangs at the door, the church bell tolls; throughout the community many sad countenances are seen, and even the passing stranger feels that some sorrowful event has transpired.

Here let the veil be drawn. The customs of society determine what next must follow; nor need the shaded memories of that solemn interval be revived.

The funeral occurred on Thursday, the 9th of September. When the procession left the lonely dwelling, at Cobleskill, the village church bells tolled, as did also the bells of Lawyersville when it arrived at that place where the services were held. The exercises were conducted by Rev. Mr. Van Alstine, of Fordsboro, assisted by Rev. Mr. Ludden, of Cobleskill. In going from Lawyersville to Slate Hill Cemetery, several churches were passed, from whose towers the tolling knells proclaimed the sympathy and sorrow of an afflicted population. His final resting place has already been described, and the sermon preached upon the occasion will next claim the attention of the reader.

CHAPTER XV.

FUNERAL SERMON.

In making the *Funeral Sermon* a part of the *Memoir*, scarcely any explanation can be necessary. The wishes of friends, the opinion of ministerial brethren who heard it, fully accord with the convictions of the writer. The only regret is that it cannot be reproduced as it was preached. The preparation was in the form of a skeleton, and it was delivered extemporaneously. Accordingly, it was written out from memory and considerably condensed. In reading, however, those who heard, will recognize fidelity to every essential position.

THE FUNERAL SERMON OF REV. P. WIETING.

Delivered at Lawyersville, N. Y., September 9, 1869, *by* Rev. N. Van Alstine.

"But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more."—Acts xx. 24, 25.

The Apostle Paul was an earnest and successful worker in the Church of God. In zeal he was full of fire, in courage dauntless, in effort persevering. In his mental and moral structure there were no elements to incline him to compromise with evil, or halt in the work of his mission. He was baptized with the Spirit of his Master, fully consecrated to the holy ministry, and intensely earnest in effecting the grand purpose of his existence. Though persecution, imprisonment and death menaced him along the journey of life, yet he was uninfluenced by fear and felt no disposition to retreat; but he was fully resolved to brave all, and to fall, if need be, in the breach, and to tread in the footsteps of his Lord. He stood up as a witness for the truth with a brave heart and was unmoved, ready, at any time, to lay down his life for the Church and the cause of Christ. Paul was an example of moral heroism, not impelled and governed by mere ebullition of feeling, heedless resolve or rash judgment; but by a clear conviction of right and of duty, wise deliberation, a thoughtful and discreet purpose to

leave nothing undone consistent with the Divine will and his own well being. These ends were dear to his heart and only worthy in his estimation to control his purposes and the activities of his life; all other things were comparatively worthless. Here we have the full virtue of self-denial and of a Christlike sacrificing spirit. Here is a true, unfaltering and brave consecration of soul and body to the cause of Christ. Such a spiritual union, cemented by faith and love, persecution and cruelty cannot break, prisons and racks cannot separate, nor waters quench; but will thrive and survive amid the darkness and pains of death and coronate the Christian's brow with a crown of fadeless glory.

Paul was a model saint, a minister and worker; a model in holy life, in the active ministry; a model in faith, zeal, love and in his triumphant death. In his judgment, several things were essential to certain success. His conviction, conversion and progress in grace, constitute both a motive and an example to all who believe in Christ. So in his work, he displayed zeal, love,

self-denial, endurance, perseverance, and he met the conflicts, toils and sacrifices of the ministry with fortitude and with firmness.

To examine the subject, to suggest certain important truths, and to make application of them to the present occasion, shall be the chief object of this discourse. To do so, we shall notice, 1. *The cost and suffering inseparably connected with the ministry of the gospel.* 2. *Its chief objects.* 3. *Its closing scene.*

We notice,

I. *The cost and suffering inseparably connected with the ministry of the gospel.*

The amount of effort expended to secure an object, indicates the value or cost of that object. Also the severe conflict and array of enemies which intervene and would prevent realization, measure the expense and vital force requisite. In this way we may estimate the amount of cost and suffering inseperably connected with the work of the gospel ministry. That this is the case the whole history of the Christian Church conclusively proves. There are obvious reasons for all this.

1. The natural feelings and forces of the wicked world were arrayed against Christ, his ministry and his system of truth. To contemplate this fact from the character of Christ, his ministry and the system of pure truth he organized may seem surprising and even incredible; but from the standpoint of human corruption and malice, so strongly arrayed against purity and truth, it assumes the form of inevitable necessity. As the world now is, "it must needs be that offences come." Christ was to the Jew a stumbling-stone and to the self-conceited Greeks foolishness; but to those who are wise unto salvation, the power of God and the wisdom of God. The Saviour's soul and life were full of goodness and love, his ministry on earth was designed to do the needy good in restoring the alienated heart to the divine favor and in bringing the rebellious will into harmony with God, and his pure system of truth, to work out for man spiritual freedom and suitably qualify him for heaven. That such a revolution in the moral condition of our race as Christ came to effect, should excite such bitterness of feeling

and stern opposition on the part of those who were to receive the benefit, is surprising and overwhelming. Such a divine project should be welcomed and be cheerfully improved, and not despised and spurned with indignant feeling. Yet it was, and is so still, an undeniable fact, that Christ was "despised and rejected of men," that he was a "man of sorrow and acquainted with grief;" and that all who will follow Christ and preach his gospel must practice self-denial, and endure tribulation and suffering, and count the cost connected with the best ministry on earth. Christ came to save a ruined world and how soon his garments were rolled in blood! His apostles went forth on the same mission of mercy, and how soon they were constrained to take life in their hand and by suffering fill up the measure of Christ—to drink his cup and be baptized with his baptism of persecution, suffering and blood! Such resistance to truth and malicious indignation against the means and agencies which God has appointed to work out for man holiness and suitable qualification for heaven, not only proves that

the moral sentiments of mankind are corrupt, but that madness is in their heart—that judgment and will are enslaved by base passions and sinful inclinations.

The whole realm of darkness, including principalities and powers, were arrayed in deadly conflict against the Church and the ministry of Christ. Force against force, weapon against weapon, falsehood against truth, corruption against holiness, ignominy against honor and glory, death against life. Severe, long and without compromise was this spiritual warfare, attended with sorrow, expense, suffering and death. But Christ, the captain of our salvation, skillful to marshal his hosts and wield the weapons of truth, was victorious in the contest and spoiled the dominion of darkness. He gained the throne and will continue to reign until he shall have subdued death the last enemy of the saints of God.

This ministry of truth and righteousness, instituted by our Lord, has been committed as a responsible trust to the agency of man and it is required of him to be faithful. It may cost self-

denial, toil and suffering, but there is no retreat from the contest nor conditional surrender of the important trust. He who puts on the armor and is appointed a leader must prove dexterous, true and unflinching, contending for the faith of saints and the unsullied honors of Christ. The treasure of the gospel was put into "earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power might appear to be of God and not of man." All should prove true and faithful in the ministry, whether they "prove a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death," that they might be approved and accepted of God. If no one should rashly enter the ministry, neither should man decline honest investigation and cheerful assumption of duty in connection with it.

2. The apostle stood up in the ministry of Christ determined, brave and unmoved before upheaving corruption and threatened cruelty, because his convictions of divine truth and the ministry of the gospel were clear and full. If he had no doubt of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, neither had he any misgiving in reference to the divine appointment of the ministry.

He had not entered the work inconsiderately or rashly, but from a full conviction of the truthfulness of the gospel and a deep sense of duty resting on his judgment and conscience. These decided convictions impelled him to embrace the very doctrines he once despised and labored hard to destroy, and to discharge the duties of that very ministry he once so resolutely endeavored to overthrow. Paul was convinced and decided; he deliberately and intelligently undertook the work of the ministry before God and in view of the Judgment Day, therefore he struck the roots of his religious life deep and strong in the grace of the Cross; he stood up before the world immovably with the shout of praise on his tongue. Hurling defiance at all the powers of darkness, yet he was as gentle and confiding as a child. He had fully counted the cost and was ready for the sacrifice. He felt no fear of suffering, for he was fully conscious that Christ, his divine pattern, had endured infinitely more than any human being can possibly endure.

What moral heroism was reflected in the pro-

fession of faith and in the life-services of the Apostle! It contained every essential element of truthfulness, worth and manhood. It revealed sincerity of thought and purpose, fidelity to principle, and singleness of motive to honor the ministry and his divine Master. He stood up for the gospel and its Author in the true nobility of the Christian, the man and the minister, without duplicity, compromise, or hesitation; wholly consecrated to God, a living sacrifice on the altar of the church, and void of the least intimidation at heavy burdens, abnegations, bitter sufferings which might befal him in the course of life. Indeed, from first to last, he "counted all things loss" and worthless in comparison with a true interest in Christ. Christ and his saving grace were more precious to his heart than gold or silver, than all else beside; yea, than life itself.

No person can offer any thing more valuable than his life. This was the incomparable offering made by Christ, for when nothing else could purchase our salvation, he gave his life as a sin offering for man; and this Paul was willing to do, if

necessary, to testify the grace of God, to imitate and fill up the measure of the sufferings of Christ, and to confirm the honest convictions of the truthfulness of the gospel and of the divine origin of the gospel ministry.

This clear and spontaneous resolve of the Apostle, is not the reckless language of a madman. It is not the result of moral stupidity or derangement; but the clear and conscientious deduction of a logical mind. It was just what his intelligent feelings, permeated and controlled by divine grace, prompted him to, in view of the supreme goodness and incomparable glory of the gospel of Christ, and of its precious results. He estimated the sacrifice of life infinitely less than the object for which it was made. As Christ taught the world, and as the Apostle was willing to exemplify, that "he who would lose his life for his sake, should gain it;" in other words, any one would give the whole world in exchange to gain the glorified life in heaven.

But why so much suffering to fulfill the design of the Christian ministry and gain the beneficent

object of divine grace? This is an important question and it demands a candid answer. The suffering of Christ, the suffering of the ministry, the suffering of the Church; all this occurs, but why? What purpose does it effect? Does it subserve in the economy of God any important end?

All suffering presupposes a grievous wrong somewhere. The person's own guilt may be the cause of his suffering, or it may be substitutionary. As Christ was innocent, he could not suffer for his own sins; therefore his sufferings were substitutionary. "He bore our sins in his own body on the tree." He "suffered the just for the unjust that he might bring us to God." So also Paul suffered *in* the work and *for* the work of the sacred ministry. Both the sufferings of Christ and of his servants, *manifest the heinous nature of sin.* All sin produces suffering and the fruit of sin declares its intrinsic criminality. Therefore the sufferings of Christ were the most clear and impressive manifestation of the true nature of sin that could have been given. Sin will necessarily appear most atrocious when viewed in contrast

with the greatness and brightness of the divine perfections; and its inherent culpability is most fully unfolded when it is necessary for the innocent to suffer for the guilty. Hence, Christ exposed his person to scorn and contumely, his character to jibes and vilification, his ministry to resistance and perversion; nay, he laid down his life, not only to show his love for the world and to save it, but also to prove the guilt of rebellion and sin. Paul felt willing to tread in the footsteps of his Master, to suffer and die in order to seal his convictions of Christ as the true Saviour, the truthfulness of his teachings and of the ministry as a divinely ordained institution.

3. So clearly and universally have suffering and cost followed the work of the ministry in every age, that all true and faithful ministers can adopt the language of Paul, "If in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable;" for all are constrained to forego the indulgence and comforts common to other vocations, to endure privations and hardships, and many have laid down life itself in the good cause. The love of

Christ, which is stronger than the love of life, constrains them. Those who know nothing of this power and who are not ready for such sacrifices are not worthy of this work. As friends suffer for friends, parents for children, so ministers often suffer for their people, feeling, as Paul felt, that it is not "expedient" for them to avoid even the "care of all the churches," in addition to other burdens. Thus it has been and will continue to be until the end of time. How many have turned away from lucrative vocations, from fame and honor, ease and pleasure, that they might consecrate themselves to the service of God in seeking the salvation of men. We notice,

II. *Its objects.*

The ministry of the gospel is adapted to subserve several objects, all more or less vital to the best interests of mankind. It is designed to impart instruction and to proclaim truth; to turn the people from "darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God;" to restore them to the dominion of Christ, and to offer them freely an "inheritance among them which are sanctified."

1. The design of this ministry may be seen in the fact that it is divine in its origin and invested with divine authority. Accordingly, the Apostle felt fully authorized to unfold the way of salvation without "conferring with flesh and blood." He did not receive his commission from man but from God. His qualifications were, the heart of the Christian and the help of Christ. Thus he felt when he exclaimed, "Paul, an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead." Entrusted with divine authority, he did not seek the endorsement of men, but felt at liberty to preach Christ and to establish rules for the government of the churches. In all these respects he was not inferior to any other apostle at Jerusalem. He was utterly unwilling to admit that his right to preach was a *doubtful claim* and that he might be rudely thrust out of the ministry because he had not been *formally* authorized by the bishops at Jerusalem. Though last in the ministry, he was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles. He recognized with reference to himself, the

parity of the Christian ministry; the equal rights, privileges and authority of all to teach the will of God and the religious obligations of men.

The language of the Master to all true ministers is "Go ye and preach the gospel." Without this they are men-made preachers and not sent of God. They have thrust themselves into the work without divine sanction and to the "true sheep," theirs is the voice of strangers. Though called of God and invested with divine right to perform the functions of the sacred office, yet to avoid confusion and guard against imposition, regular ecclesiastical recognition is evidently desirable. To such an arrangement, as a matter of expediency, no right-minded person can object; for it does not involve any principle in conflict with the dictates and freedom of a pure conscience. Nor does it militate against the teachings of God on the subject or neutralize the doctrine of the divine origin and authority of the ministry.

2. The chief object of the ministry is to expound and publish the gospel of Christ, and to set

up the glorious kingdom of God on earth. This is a work of immense magnitude, the feasible part of which, with divine efficiency vouchsafed, is entrusted to the ministry. The world is full of sin and needs pardon; crowded with crime and needs purification; steeped in corruption and moral death, and needs renovation and life; held in captivity and needs complete redemption in Christ. This is the condition of the race, for which the gospel is the catholicon, and the ministry are fully authorized to declare to all the *good news* that God is merciful and that repentance secures salvation to believing sinners. To save our sinful world is the chief object of the gospel and of its ministry. This is worthy of God and the greatest honor of man.

3. This glorious object fired the zeal of Paul, gave stability to his purpose and caused him to make full proof of his ministry, even at the sacrifice of his life. Here stood the heroic herald of the cross, in defiance of reproach and suffering. Here were the elements of his Christian manhood, love, zeal, courage. If Christ could say, "the

zeal of thy house has eaten me up," with the responsibility of the ministry resting upon his heart, why should not Paul exclaim, "Who is sufficient for these things?" And he did devote himself to unceasing and loving toil to attain the end of the ministry. Here and there, now and then, the beacon fires of a sanctified ministry, have gleamed more brightly amid the gloom of corrupt and superstitious ages, than at other times; but it has always proved the conservator of the world. Its duties have always been arduous, but its honors undying, and the reward is more than a compensation for the work.

4. The Apostle's great desire was to *finish his ministry with joy*. It was therefore necessary that he should perform his whole work and do it well. Success is less essential than fidelity; for whether we prove a "savor of life unto life," or of "death unto death," we are accepted of the Lord if true to our trust. Paul "became all things to all men that by all means he might save some," yet he was not thoughtless of his own personal happiness. He worked that he might be approved, and hear

at last the Master say, "Well done good and faithful servant." Who can be happy under the reproaches of conscience and the frowns of God? The denunciation, "Thou wicked and slothful servant," sends to the soul, wretchedness, remorse and poignant pain. All wish to feel that God smiles upon them, that their work is done and well done, and to anticipate the fadeless crown, set with sparkling stars.

III. *The closing scene.*

1. The Apostle was closing up his last labors and visitations with the church at Ephesus. He felt conscious that his ministry among them would end at his departure from the place, as is clearly indicated by the touching expression, "ye shall see my face no more." The solemn thoughts which crowded into his mind, the vivid reflections upon the past and the rebounding contemplation of the future, vibrating in flashing light on memory and consciousness, made impressions deep and overwhelming. Paul felt it and the people felt it, as their flowing tears evinced.

2. The dissolution of the pastoral relation,

when rightly established and properly improved, is a solemn and impressive event. It was so in the case of Paul and the church of Ephesus, and must ever be so between every true minister and pious flock. How can it be otherwise, for no other relation is so sacred, so tender, so far-reaching and effective. Every good man will deeply feel this.

Especially will this be the case if the relation has been of long standing and happy in its mutual influences. Mutual duties, cares, interests, socialities, contribute greatly to increase the strength and endurance of this divinely sanctioned relation. With age it strikes its tender fibres into almost all the relations of life, among the old and decrepid, those strong in manhood, and the young, rising to important spheres of usefulness. It is nourished in the social circle, in the worship of the sanctuary, in marital festivities, and in the sorrows of bereavement. The rupture of a relation thus formed and extending over the experiences of years, must open the fountains of sympathy and break in pieces fond Christian hearts. And who

would prevent it? Who would sternly forbid the weeping scene?

This will also be the case when the pastoral relation has been strengthened by great usefulness, and resulted in the conversion and spiritual edification of multitudes. It is in this way that the relation becomes strong and sensitive, its influence effective, its dissolution, overwhelming. A church may have many instructors, but its members will not recognize many fathers. The true, the annointed pastor is the only bishop, the only father of the flock. Between such the relation will be pleasant, cemented by love and productive of precious fruit. This was tenderly realized by the Apostle and the elders of the church at Ephesus, therefore their last farewell was a solemn and weeping time.

Such scenes have been often repeated during the past centuries of the Christian Church. God's people and his servants have not been strangers to the excitement and sorrow occasioned by the dissolution of the pastoral relation. What imagination can picture, what language describe the

impressive scene, exciting thought, regret, emotion, when the retreating form waxes dim and the heartrending words are spoken, "Ye shall see my face no more." No art can portray the melting reality. Like the joys of religion, it must be felt to be understood. The long dreaded hour at last arrives; the tender and sacred tie is sundered. Bleeding hearts recoil and sensibilities shiver as with the chill of death. But it is God's decree; hence duty and religion require cordial submission.

But we pause! O, what a pause! Thought turns to a theme more sacred, more impressive, more exciting, because more vitally blended with your religious feelings and hopes, your reflections on the past, your anticipations of the future. A pastoral relation, which has extended over a period of forty years, has been ruptured by the stroke of death. What has been said is already applied. In unfolding the theme the occasion has been anticipated. Yet your reasonable expectations are to be met. Something is to be said about the life and labors of HIM who is with us to-day, only as an object of sorrowful interest.

(The sketch of character, life and pastoral labors, which constitute the last division of the Sermon are here omitted, because, substantially, the material facts and principles are elsewhere given. The touching words with which it closes must be added.)

But, my friends, your Pastor's work is done;—his face you will see no more. His familiar, solemn, pathetic voice has died away in the awful silence of the grave. His eyes are closed in the soft, deep slumbers of death. Yes, the end has come. You may still sweetly live with him in the subdued sunlight of the past; but the present, how sorrowful, how thickly draped with gloom! You will ever think of him as a *true friend;* you will fondly cherish his memory; his godly example and pious admonitions will furnish golden threads which you will incorporate in the ever extending web of Christian experience. But he has gone. Even in his sick and dying chamber you will now seek him in vain. He has entered upon his final reward. And who will complain, since his work has been so well done!

The ministry which he received of the Lord Jesus, he has finished with joy. Let him sleep in peace. Let his family and his spiritual children frequent the beautiful cemetery of his own choice and gather around his grave; let the monument which loving hands may erect perpetuate not only his memory but his virtues, and there let them renew their covenant of fidelity to God and religion, as they muse over the ashes of a spiritual father and shepherd. And, on that prospective height, awaiting the resurrection dawn, you too may sleep with him, and together you may arise to meet the Lord in the air and dwell forever in his immaculate glory. This will be the Pastor's portion; this the inheritance of his faithful flock.

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

CHAPTER XVI.

CLOSING REFLECTIONS.

Every human being constitutes, in some sense, a center of relationship and of influence. Of course, the extent of the relations sustained and the power of the influence exerted, other things being equal, depend upon the positions occupied. And as none are without associations, death is always, to a greater or less extent, a public calamity. An object of affections and attachments, having their origin in the very principle of life, is removed. A source of sympathy, whence some anxious and aching hearts have been refreshed, is closed up. Activities, ministering to the necessities of those who are dependent upon them, terminate. Hopes, resting upon the continuance of life, with all its cherished probabilities, are disappointed. Hence, every family, church, ecclesiastical body, and society of whatever character, when bereaved of a member, not only real-

izes a loss, but also a species of distraction in its affairs which must be felt and should be recognized. And the embarrassment is always in proportion to the loss sustained. It is true, prominence is not always an evidence of worth, nor can usefulness be measured by reputation. Nevertheless, the scope and weight of individual character can only be estimated by a combination of the impressions left in the different spheres in which a man has moved.

As has been seen, Mr. Wieting's relations and influence were extensive and diversified. Beyond his family and his parish he was well known and highly appreciated. He was concerned in the department of business; he was interested in the movements of society at large; he had more or less to do with denominational enterprises; with the cause of education, and with the different branches of Christian benevolence.

It is accordingly most befitting that those with whom he was associated, and with whom he acted in the different divisions of the great field of Christian and ministerial enterprise, so far as they

have expressed their views, should be heard respecting his life and labors, his rank and merit.

For many years Mr. Wieting was an efficient member, and at the time of his death, the first Vice President of the Schoharie County Bible Society. And in no religious movements, save perhaps such as related to the welfare of his own charge and of the ecclesiastical body of which he was a member, was he so deeply interested as in the efforts made to circulate the Holy Scriptures. His annual collections and contributions were never forgotten, never treated with indifference, never small. Nor would he permit other engagements to keep him from the meetings of the County Society. He attended them from principle, and because he dearly loved the cause. And his earnest appeals in its behalf have given that cause a place in the hearts of that people whom he served so long, which is sure to secure for it their cordial co-operation and largest liberality for many years to come.

At the first meeting which occurred after his death, the Society paid the following appropriate

tribute to his memory, which was not only entered upon their records, but accompanied with a well written letter, communicated to the afflicted family.

"It having pleased Almighty God in His wise Providence to remove by death, since our last annual meeting, the Rev. Philip Wieting, first Vice President of this Society, and a Life Director of the American Bible Society, we, the members of the Schoharie County Bible Society, deem it due to our late worthy associate to place on record the following notice of his death."

And after stating the time and place of his death, as also the period during which he had sustained the pastoral relation to the same charge, they say:

"During the long years of his connection with this Society, he was one of its most active and efficient supporters. He made it his business to be present at its meetings, and the meetings of the managers, when his health and strength permitted. For many years he adopted a regular and systematic course for raising contributions in

his congregation, which he brought into the treasury at every annual meeting. On matters of business connected with the Bible cause, and other benevolent operations, his sound judgment and discretion rendered him an excellent counsellor. We mourn that our valued friend and associate will meet us no more in this world. He still lives in our hearts, and his record is on high.

"May his excellent spirit animate us in our labors and his example encourage us in our Master's work. May we follow him, as he followed Christ; and when our work on earth is done, may we also be permitted to enter into that eternal rest which we trust he now enjoys."

The Franckean Evangelic Lutheran Synod convened in its 33d annual session, at Avoca, N. Y., June 2d, 1870. The scene of solemn significance which took place at the meeting the previous year, when that venerable man, if not by the prophecy vouchsafed to age, at least as a probability suggested by the state of his health, declared his conviction that he was with the body for the *last time* has already been noticed. Anticipation di-

minishes nothing from the interest of experience. The event had now arrived at which there was to be a full realization of the truth of that conviction. Other clouds, indeed there were, which shrouded the occasion, usually so hopeful and happy, with sadness and gloom. But every shadow was deepened by the impressive absence of *him*, the seniority of whose years and membership had excited in all the reverence felt for a father, and the light of whose presence and counsels had never before been missed. At every roll call, in every department of business, upon every question of interest, the oppressive fact that his place was forever vacated, that his voice was hushed in perpetual silence, seemed to rest with increasing sorrow upon every mind. In almost every sermon preached, and every prayer offered, the pervading sense of bereavement found expression, sometimes with trembling accents, sometimes with flowing tears, and always with tender emotions. At length the appropriate time arrived when the body, as such, must recognize the afflictive visitation. Rev. N.

Van Alstine, whose name now stands first upon the clerical register, with a mellowness of manner to which his decisive nature seldom yields, submitted the following:

"A TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF THE LATE REV. PHILIP WIETING.

"WHEREAS, In the inscrutable Providence of God, Rev. P. Wieting, a brother beloved and respected wherever known, a Pastor of the same charge for forty years, highly useful, greatly blessed, and in his self-denying and arduous labors, remarkably successful in bringing many souls into the covenant of grace and the church of God; and,

"WHEREAS, He was one of the founders of this Synod, and continued his relation to it in unswerving fidelity until the day of his death, always beloved and trusted by all, and never absent during all this time from a single meeting of Synod; therefore,

"*Resolved*, That we, the present members of Synod make this record of the *deep sense* of our

loss in the death of this Brother and Father in Zion; that we feel chastened in heart and impressively reminded of our own mortality; and that another affective motive is thus afforded us to increase our watchfulness, zeal and activity in the holy ministry."

Though the stricken family were not lost sight of, the resolution relating to them is here omitted. And from what has been said in regard to the prominence which Mr. Wieting held in the confidence and counsels of the body, the friendly and fraternal tenderness which every member cherished towards him, the reader can better imagine than the writer can describe what followed.

It is strange, indeed, that our nature, by the promptings of instinct, so uniformly seeks the most deeply shaded aspects of the affliction endured. In the instance under review, there were many sunny memories, the inspiration of which, had it been invoked, might have made the moment joyous. There were assurances the most satisfactory that the absent member had been elevated to a holier and happier sphere; that he

had dropped the relations so long and so honorably sustained in the church militant, to join the "general assembly and church of the first born in heaven." Why then did not the bereaved body sing the song of triumph, and clap their glad hands with joy that his sufferings were ended, that he had successfully made the great transition, that he had received the crown at the hand of his "righteous judge!" Were those pleasant associations of the past forgotten, those cheering foundations of hope overlooked? Ah, no; nevertheless, it was not joy, but sorrow, which filled every heart. Is it selfish to weep when *worth* goes to its reward? Be it selfishness, or weakness, or even wickedness, if you please, it is succeeded by no compunction. At the grave of friendship, even "Jesus wept." Nor did Paul chide his loving children when they "wept sore, and fell upon his neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they should see his face no more."

The document awaiting action was presented as the report of a committee of which the Brother

named was chairman. The motion and the second to accept and adopt, seemed like the measured and the muffled tones of the knell proclaiming the passage of the funeral cortege to the place of interment. There was none of the cold formality which characterizes the dispatch of ordinary business, none of the eagerness shown when the fate of some favorite measure is pending. The usual method of securing the Synodical sanction was expressive of the most devout and sacred emotions. The respected brother who drew up that report rose to speak. He does not often weep; he seldom looses his self possession. But his effort now ended in tears, and after a few broken sentences, he sat down to sigh. From every part of the house responses of a similar character were heard. Several suggestions were made as to what might be befitting the occasion; the vote was taken; the members dropped upon their knees, and the swelling tide of sorrow found utterance in the language of prayer.

"My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof."

And now, after endeavoring, with conscious imperfection to unfold the most important events in the life, and to portray the most prominent traits of the character of this dear *Servant* of Christ, the writer cannot lay aside his pen without attempting to give some hurried sketches of the times in which he lived, and noticing some of the changes which occurred during his ministry—changes of a more general character than those mentioned heretofore, all of whose benefits he enjoyed, though many of them transcended the sphere of his responsibility.

Seventy such years, measured by the actual achievements of mankind, exceed Methusalean longevity. It is no exaggeration to say that within the last fifty years the world has made more real progress than during all the long centuries which preceded that period. As never before, the slumbering energies of the race have been quickened to the most intense and awful activity. What discoveries have been made! What combinations of forces have been effected! What resources have been developed! Earth's

hidden realms have been explored, her area expanded, her hostile elements subdued. Time and space have been practically annihilated, and man has rendered himself potentially omnipresent. The supremacy of steam and electricity over land and sea has been triumphantly exemplified, and, by their agencies, continents have been brought within "whispering distances" of each other.

Mr. Wieting entered the ministry before the ground was broken for the Erie Canal; and when he assumed the pastoral charge of Sharon and New Rhinebeck, not a single foot of iron track had been laid in the Empire State. He saw the flat bottomed boats of the Mohawk, propelled by paddles and poles, bearing to an eastern market the produce of the middle counties, then regarded as a fearful distance towards the setting sun; and he heard the shrill whistle of the first locomotives which ran through that beautiful valley, over what is now the great New York Central Railroad, whose western termination then was the city of Utica. He lived to see the whole country a net work of railroads, and to hear the thunder of the

ponderous train along the hill sides of his adopted Schoharie, and near the door of his own last earthly dwelling. When he was born, the national domain scarcely extended to the "Father of Waters," while all west and south of the great lakes and the original thirteen states, were either Indian hunting grounds or sparsely populated territories. When he died, the stars and stripes were hailed by loyal hearts from ocean to ocean, and from the broad St. Lawrence to the Gulf. And not only had commerce reared her proud emporium on the Pacific coast, but with iron bands had linked her destiny with the great cities of the Atlantic and with the national capital.

Nearly all the national societies, whether benevolent, educational or reformatory were organized within his lifetime, and not a few during his ministry. As has elsewhere been said, he took the pledge before a temperance society was thought of, and as a practical temperance man was associated with the movement at every stage of its progress. Only a few years before he began to preach, involuntary servitude was abolished in the

State of New York, while the tremendous struggle which shook the continent, deluged the country with blood, and ended in the overthrow of that stupendous evil, was not felt until he was strongly fortified in his position by many signal victories over the powers of darkness within the bounds of his own charge. Accordingly, he shared alike the obliquy of those who, when the national conscience yet slumbered, dared to say that slavery was a sin, and the satisfaction experienced only by the early veterans of humanity, who welcomed the goddess of liberty, though in proclaiming freedom throughout all the land to all the inhabitants thereof, she passed over "fields of carnage and seas of blood."

Most of the denominational organizations and institutions which are now in operation, were called into existence while he was on the watch tower, and with nearly every religious movement in the State, bearing the name of the great Reformer, he was, to a greater or less extent, in practical sympathy. And no where within the State was the Church of the Reformation so suc-

cessful as in Schoharie, where Mr. Wieting lived, nor in any portion of that county as in the section where he labored. If to-day Lutheranism in Schoharie is not stronger, numerically and influentially, then all other denominations combined, the writer's long absence from his native county must be the cause of his mistake.

But the multiplication of churches, and the enlargement of the denominational area, indicate very imperfectly the religious transformations which occurred in that portion of the State during that period. The standard of morality was greatly elevated. General intelligence increased. The type of piety was radically changed. The scriptural terms of church membership were recognized. A different standard of ministerial qualifications was adopted. Church and ecclesiastical discipline was rendered more effective, and ministers and members alike become more spiritual. Prayer meetings, Sabbath-schools, Bible classes, special and protracted efforts for the edification of believers and the conversion of sinners, were well nigh universally sanctioned, and have been since generally sustained.

Such were some of the movements of the age in which Mr. Wieting lived and by which, more remotely, his character as a man and as a minister, was moulded; and such were some of the fruits of that system of means and measures, which, with others, he adopted and put in practical operation. And in looking over the whole of his life from this last point of observation, the closing words by which he is committed to the final judgment of the reader, so far as this memoir is concerned, are very naturally suggested.

Rev. Philip Wieting was a child of providence, a child of grace, a chosen messenger of salvation. His constitutional peculiarities were largely inherited from both his parents, and his virtues of early domestic culture, were in a great measure implanted and developed by the noble example, the vigorous judgment, the Abrahamic faith, and the unfaltering perseverance of his godly Mother. He lived in a glorious era; his lot was cast among a people to whose condition and characteristics he was admirably adapted. He was beloved and appreciated as few pastors ever have been. His

ministry was laborious and wonderfully successful. He finished his work. His preparation for death was complete. His name will be embalmed in the memories of all with whom he was associated, and generations yet unborn will rise up and call him blessed. With such discriminations, and modifications, as the judgment of charity must make for human infirmities, it may be said of him, "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace."

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